

THE  
holy  
ROMAN  
EMPIRE

I N P R O P H E C Y



THE  
holy  
ROMAN  
EMPIRE

I N P R O P H E C Y



BY BRAD MACDONALD

RESEARCH ASSISTANCE BY RICHARD PALMER

**THIS BOOK IS NOT TO BE SOLD.**

It is a free educational service in the public interest,  
published by the Philadelphia Church of God.

© 2015, 2017, 2021 Philadelphia Church of God  
All Rights Reserved

Printed in the United States of America

Scriptures in this publication are quoted from  
the King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

The Holy Roman Empire has made pivotal and defining contributions to Western civilization—but its many reincarnations have also come with painful and catastrophic consequences.

Today European leaders aim to unite the fractured continent of Europe by reviving the legacy of this extraordinary church-state combine. One of the great lessons of this empire is that it always comes back. There is always another resurrection.

The Holy Roman Empire is not just a relic of history. It is about to play a central role in world events. A study into the nature and character of this towering institution reveals as much about the future as it does the past.



## introduction

REVIVING THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE 1

## one

THE ORIGINS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH 16

## two

JUSTINIAN AND THE IMPERIAL RESTORATION 54

## three

CHARLEMAGNE—FOREFATHER OF MODERN EUROPE 72

## four

OTTO THE GREAT—THE BIRTH OF GERMAN NATIONALISM 86

## five

THE HABSBURG DYNASTY—A GLOBAL EMPIRE 102

## six

NAPOLEON—SON OF ROME 114

## seven

WORLD WAR II AND HITLER'S POPE 124

## eight

THE SEVENTH AND FINAL RESURRECTION—NOW HERE 146

## nine

WHAT COMES AFTER THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE? 170

introduction

---

# REVIVING THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

“The [European] Community is living largely  
by the heritage of the Holy Roman Empire,  
though the great majority of the people who live  
by it don’t know by what heritage they live.”

—OTTO VON HABSBURG

**I**T IS JULY 13, 2015. LAST NIGHT, EUROPE'S LEADERS pulled another all-nighter trying to agree on a solution to prevent Greece from going bankrupt, leaving the eurozone, and hurling the entire European Union into the abyss. As it stands right now they seem to have found a plan. But if recent history is any indicator, that solution will either fall through or precipitate another crisis within the next few days, or hours, or minutes.

This is 21st-century Europe: disordered, disunited and, increasingly, despondent.

Amid all the uncertainty, one reality seems absolutely certain, at least to most observers: The European Union is dying—slowly, painfully and publicly. The hope of European countries forming a united, stable, democratic, geopolitically consequential entity is vanishing. The goal of European integration, noble as it may be, is doomed. The future of global politics and power, many believe, belongs to the likes of China, Russia, Iran and the United States. The EU, assuming it can survive the current crisis, is destined to remain, at best, a secondary power.

This book forecasts a different future for the Continent.

Europe *will* unite and it *will* become a formidable global dynamo. The unity Europe attains will not be perfect; it will not come about easily or peacefully; and it certainly will not endure. But Europe *is* going to become a united superpower and a serious, daunting global power. The emergence of this *new* Europe will have far-reaching and dramatic consequences for us all.

This forecast is underpinned by two basic proofs. First, like the goal of European unity itself, it is supported by more than 1,500 years of European history. Second, it is supported by Bible prophecy.

Founded in 1951, initially as the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Union was created with the fundamental goal of reviving the ancient Holy Roman Empire. This might be hard to envision, considering what a debacle the EU is today. Nevertheless, the cherished and publicly stated goal of some Europeans, especially European leaders, is to resurrect the Holy Roman Empire.

What was the Holy Roman Empire? What would a resurrected Holy Roman Empire look like?

This empire—its composition and character, its behavior and accomplishments—was prophesied, repeatedly and in vivid detail, in the Bible. Where are these prophecies? Have they been fulfilled? What do they mean for the future of Europe, and for mankind?

Some of the answers are not pleasant, but we *need* to know.

## REVIVING THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

Brendan Simms is a historian and a professor of history at Cambridge University. In 2013, he wrote an article in the *New York Times* titled “The Ghosts of Europe’s Past.” “The cheerleaders of the European Union like to think of it as an entirely new phenomenon, born of the horrors of two world wars,” he wrote. “But in fact it closely resembles a formation that many Europeans thought they had long since left to the dustbin of history: the Holy Roman Empire ....”

Not all Europeans, however, confined the Holy Roman Empire to the dustbin of history. Here is how Otto von Habsburg, a descendant of that famous line of European royalty, put it in 1989: “The [European] Community is living largely by the heritage of the Holy Roman Empire,

though the great majority of the people who live by it don't know by what heritage they live."

These are important words from an important man. Together with other leading figures such as Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, this man built the European Community, which today we call the European Union. Habsburg died in 2011. He was a descendant of the Habsburg line of European royalty and former crown prince of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He was one of the leading architects of modern Europe—and his statement discloses the vision that underpins modern Europe.

To appreciate the significance of this truth, we need to understand the history and nature of the Holy Roman Empire—particularly the identity of the "holy" in its name.

Among historians, it is generally accepted that the Holy Roman Empire was the cyclical reincarnation of the ancient Roman Empire, presided over in each instance by the Catholic Church. *Oxford Dictionary* defines it as the "empire set up in Western Europe following the coronation of Charlemagne as emperor in the year 800. It was created by the medieval papacy in an attempt to unite Christendom under one rule."

These descriptions are accurate but woefully incomplete.

Mr. Habsburg lived in Vienna, Austria, the heart of the ancient Holy Roman Empire, and he often spoke about an illustrious crown on display in Vienna's Hofburg Palace. "We do possess a European symbol which belongs to all nations equally," he once said. "This is the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, which embodies the tradition of Charlemagne."

The founders of the EU, and many European leaders

today, readily acknowledge that the supreme goal of the European Union is to live “by the heritage of the Holy Roman Empire.” European politicians regularly declare their admiration for Charlemagne and publicly admit that they seek to create a united Europe that “embodies the tradition of Charlemagne.”

What is the “heritage of the Holy Roman Empire”? Who was Charlemagne? What is the “tradition of Charlemagne”? We *need* the answers to these questions if we are to understand modern Europe and anticipate its future.

Modern Europe wants to resurrect the Holy Roman Empire. That means this history is also *prophecy* of the imminent future—and that makes this a subject of paramount importance.

## REVEALING GOD AND THE GOSPEL

The purpose for this book is twofold. First, it aims to provide a glimpse into the immediate future of both Europe and the world by examining the history that is informing the modern revival of this church-state combine.

The second purpose of this book is truly inspiring: It is to show how the history and prophecy of the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire *reveal God and the gospel*.

In order to grasp this wonderful truth, you must be willing to consider what the Bible says about this subject. Considering the topic of this book, referring to Scripture shouldn’t seem unusual; after all, the term “holy” in Holy Roman Empire implies religion, which implies (or at least should imply) the use of the Bible. Any attempt to discuss the *Holy* Roman Empire without employing the Bible is doing this subject injustice.

It is a sad fact that many people have little tolerance for the Bible. Invoking it, they believe, makes a person simpleminded, unreasonable, irrational or uneducated. But the Bible is Western civilization's most important and defining piece of literature. It is also a widely recognized and valuable history book. Isn't closing your mind to what this book says illiberal, unreasonable and simpleminded?

Note some statements in Scripture that begin to reveal the way God uses the Holy Roman Empire to declare His presence and supremacy.

In Isaiah 46:9-10, He says, "... I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand ...."

In Isaiah 40, He says, "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things .... Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance .... All nations before him are as nothing ..." (verses 25-26, 15, 17).

The God of the Bible is the ultimate authority in the affairs of mankind. Few realize it today, but God sanctions the rise and fall of human empires and nations. He decides the borders of nations. He oversees all major developments in international relations. God reigns supreme in the affairs of men.

Another important truth that might surprise the reader is this: The Bible clearly shows that *this is not God's world*. Most of the customs and traditions, cultures and societies, lifestyles, governments and economies of human civilization were not designed by God, and He does not endorse them. The Bible teaches that this world is under the control and influence of Satan the

devil, a former archangel who rebelled against God (e.g. 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 12:9). This explains the presence of so much evil and unhappiness in our world.

But the profound influence of the devil on this world does not preclude God's involvement in world events.

Psalms 33:10-15 say, "The Eternal wrecks the purposes of pagans, he brings to nothing what the nations plan; but the Eternal's purpose stands for ever, and what he plans will last from age to age. ... The Eternal looks from heaven, beholding all mankind; from where he sits, he scans all who inhabit the world; he who alone made their minds, he notes all they do" (Moffatt translation).

Any person who has the humility to meditate on that passage will see that it is astonishingly hopeful and inspiring.

The tendency of human nature is to focus on the *self*, to behave as if the universe revolves around oneself. Thus blinded by vanity and self-absorption, individually and collectively, most people fail to see and accept that God is the ultimate authority in the affairs of humanity.

This is why God gives Bible prophecy: to prove that He exists and that He reigns supreme.

Though this world and human nature are under the influence of the devil, God steers world events to ensure that every word He has uttered is fulfilled exactly as He said. God monitors everything, and He sanctions every major and even many minor decisions and developments.

This is one of the most hopeful, reassuring truths a person can know. And the Catholic religion and the Holy Roman Empire are important because they provide quantifiable, living, irrefutable proof of this truth.

How?

## HOW RELEVANT IS PROPHECY?

In this world—even in much of Christianity—Bible prophecy is almost universally ignored and rejected. But did you realize that fully *one third* of the Bible is devoted to prophecy? To discard prophecy is to discard one third of the Bible.

Of all the *prophecy* in the Bible, it is easily provable that the great majority revolves around the time we are currently living in and the months and years ahead. Author and educator Herbert W. Armstrong taught that 90 percent of the Bible's prophecy is for our time. This is an astounding truth when you consider that the final canon of the Bible was finished more than 1,900 years ago.

Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, which comprise the Pentateuch, roughly 1,400 years before the lifetime of Jesus Christ. The major and minor prophets, which are filled with so much prophecy, were written between 400 and 800 years before Christ. The Apostle John wrote his Gospel, his epistles and the book of Revelation in the final decade of the first century, and authorship of the Bible was completed by A.D. 100.

Now think on this.

If the Holy Roman Empire was discussed in the Bible *long before it even existed*—in some instances, more than a thousand years prior to it coming on the scene—then this would surely prove the existence of a higher power, a divine architect, a supreme being capable of intervening in human affairs and shaping world history.

If the Holy Roman Empire is indeed *fulfilled prophecy*, then it is dramatic, tangible, undeniable proof of God's existence. And if the prophecy of the Holy Roman Empire is accurate, then other biblical prophecies and truths would surely also be accurate. This would make

the Bible a valuable resource for forecasting world events—even for *preparing* for them.

So, was the Holy Roman Empire prophesied in the Bible?

## HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE PROPHESED

The Holy Roman Empire is spoken of in multiple prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments. This book will explore many of these prophecies. Let's review one specific chapter now. Written more than 400 years before the Holy Roman Empire came into existence, this chapter gives a detailed, thorough explanation of this empire's nature and motives, its leadership, and its accomplishments.

The book of Revelation is about “things which shall be hereafter,” or events that would occur *after* John's time (Revelation 1:19). Revelation contains prophecy of end-time events. Revelation 17 was written by the Apostle John around A.D. 90. The specific purpose of this pivotal chapter, as verse 1 plainly states, is to describe the “judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.” This “great whore” symbolizes a specific institution. In this chapter, God gives John a vision, beginning in verse 3, in which He gives the apostle insight into the character and conduct of this institution, and a look at its final judgment and its end.

John's vision contains three primary characters. The first two are revealed in verse 3: “So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.” The third is revealed in verse 6: “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:

and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”

The first character of Revelation 17 is the “whore” or “woman,” which in biblical language represents a religion, or church (e.g. Ephesians 5; 2 Corinthians 11:2). The second is the beast that has seven heads and 10 horns. The third is the “saints” or “martyrs,” a group of people the “woman” lives to persecute and destroy.

Revelation 17:4 says this “woman” is “arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls ....” She is conspicuously wealthy, overflowing with material splendor. She is a famous religion known and revered by people across the planet (see also verses 2 and 15 and Revelation 18:3).

The scene in Revelation 17:3 of the woman riding, or guiding, the beast depicts a religion brandishing political power. Verse 2 says the “kings of the earth have committed fornication” with her. Verse 18 says, “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” This religion enmeshes itself with the affairs of kings and empires. It is a power player in international relations.

Revelation 17 is clear. This religion is incredibly wealthy; it has a global presence and influence; it is a potent force in politics and international relations; and it uses the beast to pursue its grim ambitions.

Now look at the beast it rides. Verse 3 says this creature has seven heads and 10 horns. Verse 9 says that the “seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.” In biblical language, a mountain is a symbol for a nation or kingdom (e.g. Isaiah 2:2-3). Here, each “head” signifies a distinct kingdom, or empire.

Revelation 17:10 reveals that these seven heads are also “seven kings,” or seven individuals, each ruling

# Time Line of the Holy Roman Empire

*"The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."*

Revelation 17:9

A.D. 554

Imperial Restoration

774

Frankish Kingdom

962

Holy Roman Empire



a kingdom. The seven heads represent seven distinct empires, or kingdoms, each with its own king. Verse 10 shows that these empires, or kingdoms, are successive, not concurrent.

All of these kings, or kingdoms, are inspired and led by the woman. To Catholics, the Holy Roman Empire is secular history, with the Vatican trapped in the middle as a reluctant and unwilling participant. That is not true.

Finally, what do the 10 horns represent? Again, Scripture reveals the answer. Verses 12-14 show that the 10 horns represent 10 kings, or 10 nations, that coalesce around and submit themselves to the superior king ruling over the seventh kingdom. We will discuss these

The Apostle John compares the Holy Roman Empire to a mountain range comprised of seven mountains. Just as yawning valleys separate mountains, there are valleys distinguishing these seven peaks, or resurrections, of the Holy Roman Empire.

These troughs mark a lull in the power and activity of the Roman Catholic Church and Holy Roman Empire.

1520

Habsburg Dynasty

1805

Napoleon's Kingdom

1870-1945

Italy & Fascist Regimes

Today

United Europe



MELISSA BARREIRO/PCG

10 horns in greater detail in the final chapter of this book, where we return to Revelation 17.

Now let's summarize the prophetic message of Revelation 17. This vision is obviously about a towering church—a wealthy, imperialistic, ambitious religion—presiding over the rise of seven distinct empires, or kingdoms, each ruled by a specific king. And this woman uses her influence over each empire to try and destroy the true “saints” of God.

If you read to the end of this book, you will come to appreciate how perfect this description of the Holy Roman Empire is. The Holy Roman Empire that is recorded and discussed in countless history books. The

Holy Roman Empire whose history is still plainly evident in the cathedrals and castles, the ruins and battlefields, the symbols and memorabilia, the customs and practices of Europe today.

Most significantly, you will see what an apt description it is of the Holy Roman Empire currently being resurrected in Europe.

And to think, Revelation 17 was written more than 400 years *before* the first manifestation in Europe of the Holy Roman Empire.

## FULFILLED PROPHECY

This book has barely begun and already it implies some pretty harsh truths: that the Catholic religion is the “woman” of Revelation 17; that the Holy Roman Empire is the seven-headed beast ridden by the woman; and that together these two seek to undermine, persecute and destroy the true religion of God.

The natural reaction, particularly if you are Catholic, European or an intellectual, will be disgust, perhaps even fury. Some might feel this is an unwarranted attack on the Catholic Church or the European Union. But it is important for the reader to set aside these emotions, even if only for a moment, and be willing to have his thinking and beliefs challenged.

Remember the twofold purpose of this book. First, we are exploring the history of the Holy Roman Empire in an effort to warn the reader about its imminent resurrection in Europe. The better we understand what this entity did in the past, the better we will recognize what it plans to do in the future.

The stakes are too high to make a mistake. Bible prophecy says the final resurrection of the Holy Roman

Empire will cause global devastation that will affect every person on Earth. The destruction and suffering will be exponentially worse than World War II. Are you sure, totally convinced, 100 percent certain that the Bible is wrong, that the Holy Roman Empire was not prophesied, and therefore there is no need to consider the ramifications of it being revived today?

This is a life-or-death question.

The reader must not allow emotion, habit, family tradition or the crowd mentality to prevent him from at least considering this history and what the Bible has to say about the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire.

Let's be honest. The contemporary Western mind has developed the destructive habit of preferring heartwarming platitudes over hard truth. Most people dislike hearing the truth about their flaws and weaknesses, about threats and dangers. Most ignore or reject truth they find distressing or unappealing.

Two weeks before the time of this writing in 2015, there was a horrific terrorist attack in Tunisia. Thirty-eight people were killed, and most of the victims were British. This is a great tragedy; one's heart aches for the victims and their families. But was it surprising? Radical Islam has been devouring North Africa for half a decade. Islamist terrorists regularly threaten Western tourists, and multiple terrorist cells are known to operate in Tunisia. Just a couple of months ago, 21 people, mostly tourists, were killed and more than 50 were injured when terrorists attacked the Bardo National Museum, just a few miles from the beach where this latest attack occurred.

The facts strongly suggest Tunisia might not be the safest place for a vacation. Yet many Western tourists ignored this truth and took holidays in what is known

to be an increasingly dangerous part of the planet for Westerners.

The lesson is: It's best to face the truth, even if it makes one upset or uncomfortable. And even if it means one might have to change his habits or thinking.

Second, and most importantly, remember that the history of the Holy Roman Empire proves God's existence and the veracity of His Word. This is a truth that every person on Earth will have to come to understand and that every reader would do well to think seriously about. Please, read this book all the way to the end. The message, if you really get it, is important, wonderful and life-changing.

Consider it. If God prophesied in the first century that a great false religion would preside over seven distinct empires, and subsequent history shows a great religion presiding over seven distinct empires, this is fulfilled prophecy. Surely there is no other rational explanation.

If a prophecy is obviously and quantifiably fulfilled, that proves that a supreme power capable of bringing that prophecy to fruition also must exist. No man could forecast something like the Holy Roman Empire, and certainly no man could influence world conditions over the course of two millennia to bring it to pass. If the Holy Roman Empire exists, and if it looks and behaves exactly as God prophesied it would, *then God must exist*.

Now think about the consequences of proving God's existence.

If God really does exist—if He is alive and living, all-powerful and supreme—then you can now start answering life's most perplexing, most fundamental questions: What is man? What is the purpose of man? What is man's future? The answers come only *after* one has proved God's existence.

If God exists, then mankind, despite the chaos and hopelessness that engulfs us, has a bright future. If God exists, and if what He teaches in the Bible is true, then there is reason to be optimistic. If God exists, then there is cause for *hope*.

Doesn't the world right now—*don't you*—need some hope?

Let's see in stirring detail just how the Holy Roman Empire fulfills Bible prophecy—and is destined to do so again in your lifetime.

one

---

# THE ORIGINS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

“And upon her forehead was a name written,  
MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF  
HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

—THE APOSTLE JOHN

**H**AVE YOU EVER SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED THE ORIGINS of the world's largest religion?

The Roman Catholic Church is the most recognizable and illustrious religion on Earth. Worldwide, it has more than 1.2 billion followers, roughly 400,000 priests and some 221,000 parishes. Catholicism has a presence on every continent and in every nation. Tens of millions of Catholics dutifully attend services each week. Around the world, Catholic priests and authorities are invited to contribute to conversations, public and private, on religion, politics, culture, morality and virtually every other subject.

More than 5 million tourists flock to Vatican City annually. They visit to admire Michelangelo's legendary frescoes, to attend mass in the Sistine Chapel, and in the hope of catching a glimpse of the most venerated figure on the planet: the pope.

Yet despite its global ubiquity, colossal fame, material splendor and long history, the Catholic Church is an enigma. Even to lifelong Catholics.

Each summer more than 20,000 visitors—tourists presumably interested in Catholic history—walk through the Vatican's museums every day. But if you stood outside these museums and asked people to explain the true *origins* of the Catholic religion, most couldn't give a satisfactory answer. Even most devout Catholics are unable to provide a clear, convincing explanation of the identity of their religion. Most Catholic priests and historians will stumble when asked to reconcile what they believe about their religion and its doctrines with what the Bible teaches. Very few can clearly explain when Catholicism came into existence, where the religion began, who its earliest forefathers were, or the origins of its major practices.

The Catholic religion is the most famous Christian religion on Earth, yet it is shrouded in mystery.

Isn't that remarkable? No institution, government or religion has shaped European history—which comprises a significant chunk of Western civilization—more than the Roman Catholic Church. As historian Thomas Woods wrote, “Western civilization owes far more to the Catholic Church than most people—Catholics included—often realize. The church, in fact, built Western civilization” (*How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization*).

It is inaccurate to imply that the Catholic Church is solely responsible for building Western civilization. The influence of English-speaking civilization, which had a distinct anti-popish, anti-Catholic identity, is responsible as much as if not more than the Catholic Church. But Woods's fundamental point is correct. Catholic leadership and teaching has had a decisive and far-reaching influence on Western religion, politics, culture, science and education, often in ways most people fail to recognize.

The Vatican has presided over the rise and fall of kings and governments, the emergence of political and ideological movements, and the discovery and colonization of new lands and peoples. The Catholic religion has influenced every facet of Western society, from art and music to science to the measurement of time to the annual holidays we celebrate. Its influence over Europe is even more extensive: It has shaped Europe's legal systems, its educational institutions, many of its most prominent cities, its economies and even agriculture.

When it comes to religion, *every* Christian

denomination—except one—can directly or indirectly trace its lineage back to Roman Catholicism.

The Roman Catholic Church is the most defining and influential institution in Europe's history—yet somehow it remains a total *mystery*!

This chapter provides a thorough, logical explanation of the origins of the Catholic Church. Unlike most works on this subject, the Bible forms the foundation of this study. After all, the Catholic Church invokes the authority of the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles to support its claim that it is God's true Church. Isn't it reasonable, then, to ask what the Bible says about the origin of this church?

### **'MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT'**

We have seen how a church is pictured symbolically in Revelation 17 as a woman. In verse 4, God prophesies that this woman, or church, would have an international presence, and would come to possess incredible wealth: "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls ...." She would be unmistakable among the world's religions. Her wealth and influence would be unmatched; she would truly be a religion to behold.

John also prophesies that this "woman" influences the "kings of the earth." She has a habit of forming relationships with and ruling over secular governments. Verse 2 says the "*inhabitants of the earth* have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." She is an *imperialistic* religion with a habit of intertwining herself with secular governments. If you study history, only one church can consistently be described this way.

Verse 9 says this church sits atop "seven mountains."



## THE BEAST AND THE WHORE

The Bible prophesies in detail about a beastly empire ridden by a false church.



Only one city on Earth is famously situated on “seven hills” and is home to the headquarters of a colossal religion. Verse 18 says, “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

Only one city has historically fulfilled this criteria: Rome.

Many Bible scholars and historians agree on the identity of the woman of Revelation 17.

Matthew Henry’s commentary says, “Rome clearly appears to be meant in this chapter. Pagan Rome subdued and ruled with military power, not by art and flatteries. ... [I]t is well known that by crafty and political management, with all kinds of deceit of unrighteousness, papal Rome has obtained and kept her rule over kings and nations.”

*Clarke’s Commentary* explains, “Therefore the 10 horns must constitute the principal strength of the Latin empire; that is to say, this empire is to be composed of the dominions of 10 monarchs independent of each other in every other sense except in *their implicit obedience to the Latin [or Roman] church*” (emphasis added throughout).

The *Scofield Bible* says, “Two ‘Babylons’ are to be distinguished in the Revelation: ecclesiastical Babylon, which is apostate Christendom, *headed up under the papacy*; and political Babylon, which is the beast’s confederated empire, the last form of Gentile world-dominion.”

Some will find it hard to accept that the woman in Revelation 17 is the Roman Catholic Church. But it wasn’t all that long ago that this truth was widely accepted, even by biblical scholars—*some of whom were Catholic*.

The Apostle John wrote the book of Revelation in the first century, long before the term *Catholic*, which means *universal*, came into existence. If we are to discover the origins of the Catholic Church in the Bible, we cannot search for the term *Catholic*. We must search for it using the name given to it by God. What does God call the “woman” of Revelation 17? Verse 5 reveals the answer—and, emblazoned on her forehead, it couldn’t be more explicit:

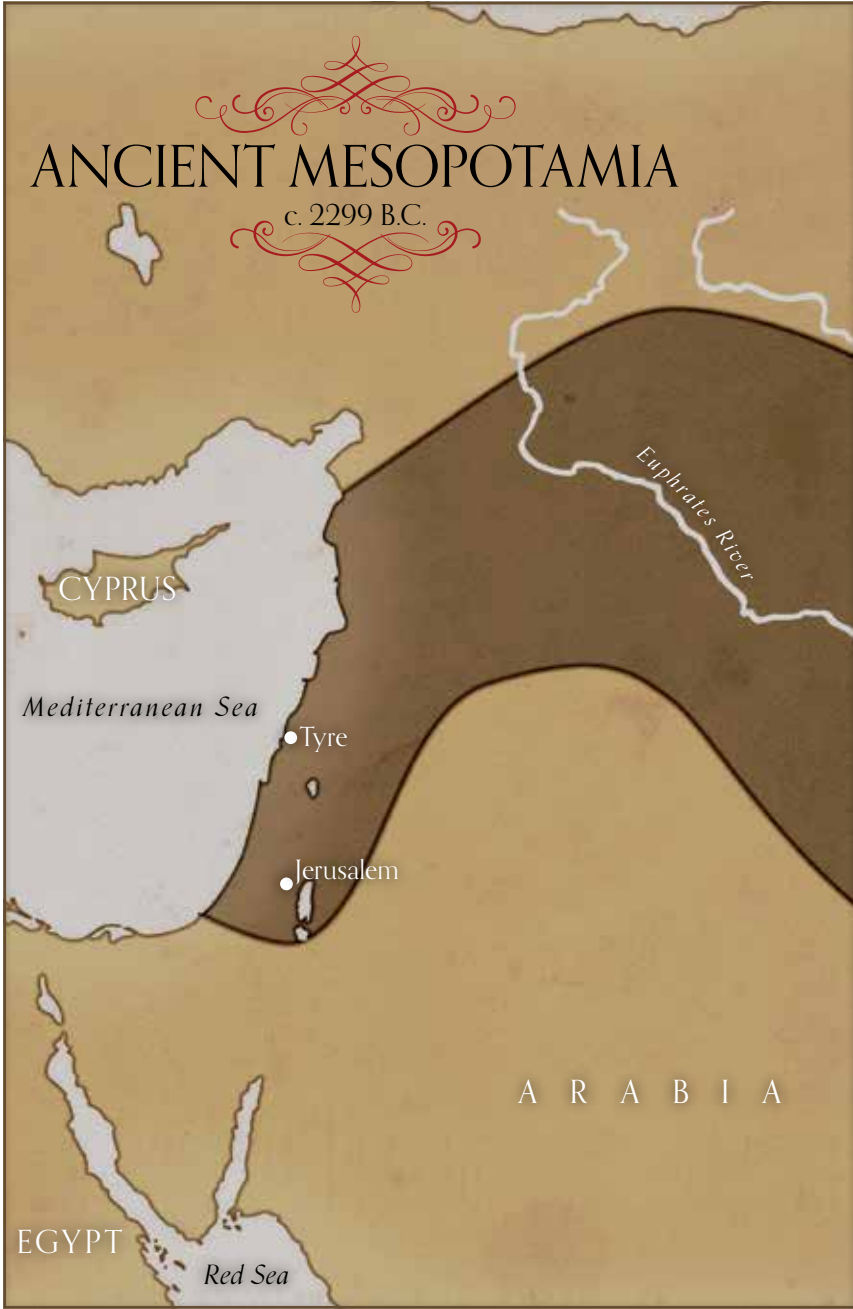
“And upon her forehead was a *name written*, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT ....” (Isn’t it interesting that John, as early as the first century, prophesied that this religion would be a mystery? “*Mystery*” is part of this woman’s name!)

Consider the *biblical* name of the church discussed in Revelation 17: BABYLON THE GREAT. *Babylon* literally means confusion, which is an apt description of this religion and its doctrines. The term *Babylon* also refers to the city of ancient Babylon. God inspired the use of this term to describe the world-dominating religion discussed in Revelation 17 for a reason: The Catholic Church, including many of its teachings, traces its heritage all the way back to ancient Babylon.

That is where we must now visit.

## ANCIENT BABYLON

Genesis 8:4 says that after the rains of the great Flood stopped and the waters receded, the ark in which Noah and his family resided “came to rest on the mountains of Ararat” (English Standard Version). These mountains are located in eastern Turkey. Following the Flood, Noah and his growing family—the seed of post-Flood humanity—migrated eastward into the “land of Shinar,”





which means the “country of the two rivers,” referring to the Tigris and the Euphrates. *Shinar* is another name for the region of *Babylonia*.

The epicenter of post-Flood human civilization was the region of Babylon, the capital of which was the city of Babylon, which sits beside the Euphrates River. It is to this city that nearly all of this world’s nations—and *religions* (with one exception)—can trace their earliest beginnings. For more information about this ancient civilization, request a free copy of Herbert W. Armstrong’s book *Mystery of the Ages*.

The history of ancient Babylon is covered in Genesis 10 and 11. The Bible doesn’t furnish many details, but those it does give are profound and enlightening. Many individuals are listed in these chapters, but one man in particular is given a comparatively detailed biography. He is described as having a “mighty” influence over ancient Babylonian civilization. He was the king of Babylon. His name was Nimrod, which in Hebrew means *rebellious* and *lawless*.

Nimrod was the son of Cush, and thus a great-grandson of Noah. Genesis 10:8 says Nimrod emerged as a powerful leader in his day and that he “began to be a mighty one in the earth.” Biblical record shows that Nimrod promised people protection from dangerous wild animals. This protection mostly came in the form of walled cities, the first of which was Babylon. It didn’t take Nimrod long to establish total control over the people. Ensnared within his city, and dependent on him for survival, the people effectively belonged to Nimrod.

Thus Babylon, the capital of Mesopotamia and seat of human civilization, came to reflect Nimrod’s character and ambition—morally, politically and *religiously*.

What was Nimrod's character? The words "mighty one" in Genesis 10:8 are translated from a Hebrew word that connotes a *tyrant*. Verse 9 records that he was a "mighty hunter *before* the LORD"; the Hebrew word translated *before* should more accurately be translated as AGAINST. Nimrod was a tyrant whose primary motivation in life was working against God. Nimrod constructed the city of Babylon and established the entire Babylonian kingdom—which included most of the world's population at the time—in an act of rebellion against God!

Nimrod set himself up as the supreme, infallible religious authority. He put himself before God. To his followers, Nimrod *was* God!

This explains why, in the Bible, *Babylon* is generally synonymous with *rebellion and lawlessness*.

Genesis 11 records Nimrod's construction of the city of Babylon. His motive for building this city is noteworthy. Verse 4 records that it was an attempt to "make us a name"—to gain eminence and renown. Neither God nor His servant Noah had authorized Babylon's construction. Moreover, the fact that the people constructed a tower "whose top may reach unto heaven" shows that the people knew they were disobeying God. Nimrod and his rebellious followers remembered the Flood—which was punishment for mankind's rebellion—and were building a gigantic tower to try to escape another flood that might come as a result of their wickedness.

Babylon's construction represented an attempt by Nimrod and the people to separate themselves from God—and to counterfeit the work God was performing through Noah.

Babylon was the headquarters of Nimrod's campaign

to oppose God. As Herbert W. Armstrong wrote, it was Nimrod who “started the great organized worldly apostasy from God that has dominated this world until now” (*The Plain Truth About Christmas*). Together with his wife, Semiramis (who was also his mother), Nimrod concocted, then imposed on his followers, his own system of finance, politics and education.

Nimrod exalted himself as the religious leader of the people. He established himself as the chief spiritual authority in place of God and God’s servant Noah. As the priest of Babylon, and in league with Semiramis, Nimrod conceived the Babylonian mystery religion, which included a multitude of pagan religious doctrines and practices. Today many of the practices and symbols associated with Christmas and Easter, for example, can be traced back to ancient Babylon. (For proof, read Alexander Hislop’s book *The Two Babylons*, available in bookstores.)

Nimrod was eventually killed by Noah’s son Shem. But the false and rebellious political and religious system he created did not die with him. It thrived, thanks to the work of Semiramis. With her son dead, as Hislop explains, Semiramis convinced her followers that Nimrod now lived as an immortal spirit being. In death, Nimrod was worshiped as a god. He became known as the messiah. Together, Semiramis and Nimrod—the original mother and child duo—became chief objects of worship in ancient Babylon.

The doctrines of the immortal soul and mother-child worship—to name only two Catholic teachings—can be traced directly back to Nimrod and Babylon.

By the time he died, Nimrod’s false system was entrenched in mankind. One cannot overstate what Nimrod and Semiramis achieved in Babylon. *It was*

*from this rebellious civilization that all other civilizations emerged.* The Bible clearly records the confusion of the languages and the dispersion of the various peoples from the region of Babylon (Genesis 11). As the various races and peoples dispersed, they took with them the beliefs and practices of the Babylonian mystery religion, many of which remained ingrained—though they were often altered—in the new religions developed by the various races.

“Semiramis was actually the founder of much of the world’s pagan religions, worshiping false gods,” Mr. Armstrong wrote in *Mystery of the Ages*. Many mainstream symbols and holidays, even Christian doctrines and practices, still in common use today, can be traced back to the Babylonian mystery religion. Christmas and the Christmas tree, Easter, Sunday worship, the trinity, the “sacred” mother-child relationship—these beliefs and practices are all rooted in ancient Babylon.

The Bible is clear that the name *Babylon* is synonymous with Nimrod, his act of *rebellion*, and his post-Flood establishment of the *Babylonian mystery religion*. In Revelation 17:5, when God associates this “woman,” or church, with Nimrod and ancient Babylon, He is showing us that this religion is the offspring of the Babylonian mystery religion, a continuation of the pagan religious system created by Nimrod in blatant rebellion against God.

There are similarities in doctrines and practices between the Babylonian mystery religion and the Catholic religion. But this could be coincidence, unless there is something to directly connect ancient Babylon to the Roman Catholic Church.

That key piece of evidence exists and is, yet again, clearly revealed in the Bible.

## MYSTERY RELIGION RELOCATES

The events described in 2 Kings 17 take place about 720 years before the time of Christ. By the eighth century B.C. the nation of Israel had split in two. The 10-tribed kingdom of Israel existed in Samaria, a region north of Jerusalem that encompasses parts of modern Lebanon and Syria. The kingdom of Judah existed in the south with Jerusalem as its capital.

2 Kings 17 recalls God's punishment on the 10-tribed nation of Israel for rejecting His law. "For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God," verse 7 says. Under the leadership of the Ephraimite king, Jeroboam, Israel was embracing pagan gods, erecting heathen statues, and disobeying God's command to keep the Sabbath. God had warned them extensively through a series of prophets. But the people remained staunch in their rebellion.

In the late eighth century B.C., God punished the Israelites by having the Assyrians, a cruel and war-loving people from the region of Mesopotamia, invade Samaria. "Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years" (verse 5). This besiegement and invasion occurred between 721 and 718 B.C.

Now notice: "In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, AND CARRIED ISRAEL AWAY INTO ASSYRIA ..." (verse 6). The Israelites were picked up and relocated. (To learn where they went, request a copy of Herbert W. Armstrong's book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, and we will send it to you at no cost.)

After the Assyrians removed the Israelites from their towns and cities, they did not leave Samaria uninhabited. The Bible records that "the king of Assyria brought men

from Babylon, and from Cuthah [near Babylon] ... *and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof*" (verse 24).

This explains the perpetuation of Nimrod's Babylonian mystery religion.

At this moment, around 718 B.C., tens of thousands of Babylonians, perhaps more—people steeped in the teachings and practices of Nimrod's Babylonian mystery religion—were planted in the region of Samaria. The Babylonians and the false religion of Nimrod and Semiramis became entrenched there.

It was *in Samaria*, roughly 750 years after this transplant, that the Catholic Church was formally created. And, as we might expect, this history too was recorded in the Bible.

## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS BORN

Acts 8 explains how the Babylonian mystery religion was institutionalized, how many of its pagan practices were blended with doctrines counterfeited from those taught by Christ and the disciples, and how false "Christianity" was born. When it comes to the origins of Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church, Acts 8 is the key that unlocks it all.

The chapter opens with Philip, a faithful deacon in the true Church of God, journeying to the region of Samaria where he "preached the gospel" to the residents of the city of Samaria. Philip's work there was a huge success. The Bible records that many Samaritans "with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake ..." (verse 6). Miraculous healings occurred. Many of the evil spirits, or demons, that filled this region were

purged as a result of the presence of the true gospel. A large number of Samaritans were awed by the truth of God and especially the miracles, and “there was great joy in that city” (verses 7-8). This is a beautiful picture: the truth of God transforming an entire city and region.

Then we are introduced to a certain Samaritan, a powerful man who controlled the minds of many of the people there. “But there was a man named Simon who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the nation of Samaria, *saying that he himself was somebody great*” (verse 9; Revised Standard Version). Like Nimrod, this individual, a magic-practicing sorcerer, considered himself “somebody great.”

This was Simon Magus, or “Simon the sorcerer.”

Simon was the religious leader of the Samaritans, a people who originally came from Babylon. He was steeped in the Babylonian mystery religion. He “bewitched the people of Samaria” with the pagan doctrines and practices of ancient Babylon. This man was heavily influenced by demons and relied on them to empower his religion. Simon’s control over the people was so strong, his pagan religion so virulent, that “*all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God*” (verse 10). Simon the sorcerer had established himself as the unquestioned, infallible spiritual leader of the Samaritans. Many actually believed Simon Magus was God in the flesh.

For an egotistical tyrant like Magus, the arrival of the gospel of God was a serious threat.

At first, Simon considered the arrival of Philip and the true Church in the region as an opportunity. Read it yourself: Acts 8 says Simon listened to the gospel Philip preached and watched the miracles of God, and

was enthralled and inspired. Magus was amazed and perplexed as to how this deacon was able to perform such mighty miracles as healing the sick. As he witnessed Philip, his vanity was aroused, his imagination awakened, and his mind began to turn.

Mr. Armstrong surmised Magus's thoughts brilliantly: "[Simon Magus] knew that all pagan religions were controlled by kings or heads of state. Their religions were used to hold a grip over the people and to keep the rulers in power. Whoever controlled the religion in a country also controlled the government. Simon saw in Christ an opportunity to head up a *universal* religion—he saw visions of ruling the world, if only he could lead out in a *universal* religion that would sweep into all countries. He had to do something, or see his followers all turn Christian" (member letter, Feb. 21, 1974).

During his campaign, Philip baptized many Samaritans, *including Simon Magus* (verse 13). After baptism, Simon "continued with Philip," following the deacon around, studying and learning, and wondering in amazement at the "miracles and signs which were done." Thus, Simon grew familiar with the teachings and doctrines of the *true Church*.

Philip was only a deacon and was not vested with the spiritual authority to lay hands on the newly baptized and pray that they receive the Holy Spirit. Although he had baptized hundreds of Samaritans by plunging them under water, not one of them had had hands laid on him by an ordained minister. This is why the apostles Peter and John, upon hearing of the success of Philip's work, set out for Samaria (verses 14-16). When the apostles arrived, they immediately set about laying hands on those who had been baptized and praying that God

would give each a measure of His Holy Spirit (verse 17).

Imagine the scene. Simon Magus was in line waiting for Peter to lay hands on him. As he waited and watched, he marveled at how “through [the] laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy [Spirit] was given” (verse 18). His vanity welled and his imagination ran wild. Finally, the moment arrived for Magus to be given the Holy Spirit. He stepped before the Apostle Peter, giddy with excitement and bursting with ambition. But what he did next derailed the ceremony—and turned the tide of Western civilization.

“And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy [Spirit] was given, *he offered them money*, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy [Spirit]” (verses 18-19). This man tried to *buy* God’s Holy Spirit and the ability to give it to others!

Isn’t it interesting that Simon Magus attempted to purchase a spiritual favor from God? Can you think of an institution that grew incredibly wealthy by selling spiritual favors? (see “Selling Spiritual Favors,” page 111).

Immediately a red flag went up in Peter’s mind. Something wasn’t right with the man standing before him. God’s true Church would never *sell* spiritual favors. A man who wanted to be baptized for the right reasons would understand that. Sensing Simon Magus’s evil, selfish motives, the apostle delivered a blistering reprimand: “Thy money perish with thee .... Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: *for thy heart is not right in the sight of God*” (verses 20-21).

Simon’s attempt to receive the Spirit of God was thwarted. This man never became a member of God’s true Church. Simon Magus’s ambition was frustrated by God’s apostle. What would this sorcerer do now?

## FALSE CHRISTIANITY IS BORN

What happened next is crucial. Instead of simply rejecting Simon and his money and moving to the next convert, Peter took the time to deliver a strong prophetic warning to Simon Magus. “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness,” he stated. “For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:22-23). *Bitterness* means extreme wickedness, bitter hatred, or the capability to produce bitter fruit.

Remember, Simon Magus was already a powerful religious leader in Samaria. He was rooted in the practices and teachings of the Babylonian mystery religion, under demonic influence, and a master at deceiving people. Peter was cognizant of Simon’s abilities, as well as his extreme vanity and ambition, and knew he was capable of *producing bitter fruit*. Peter knew this man was a threat to the true Church.

*Lange’s Commentary* explains, “Peter’s words, literally, mean: ‘I regard you as a man whose influence *will be* like that of bitter gall [poison] and a bond of unrighteousness [lawlessness], or, as a man who has reached such a state.’”

In *The True History of God’s True Church*, Gerald Flurry says, “Peter’s rebuke of Simon was a grave prophetic warning. ... Acts 8:23 contains the seed of the prophecy in Revelation 17 about what that false church does on this Earth!”

After being exposed and strongly corrected by the leader of the true religion of God, Simon Magus was at a crossroads. Facing the possibility of losing many of his followers, Magus “had to do something, or see his followers all turn Christian,” Mr. Armstrong wrote (op cit). Rather than accept failure, Magus resorted to Plan B: If he couldn’t become a member of the true

Church established by Christ, *then he would simply create his own brand of Christianity.*

After he was denied the Holy Spirit and entrance into God's true Church, Simon Magus devoted the rest of his life to creating his own counterfeit Christianity!

What did this new religion look like? What city did Simon use as his headquarters? How large did his counterfeit religion become—did it grow into the universal religion he hoped and dreamed it would be?

And, as Simon's religion grew in size and power, what happened to the *true* Church—the one established by Christ, and to which Philip, Peter and John belonged?

## A NEW 'CHRISTIANITY' BORN

In creating his own religion, Simon Magus did not receive revelation from God, and he didn't bother searching God's Word for truth and doctrine. So where did his teachings and practices come from?

First, he retained some of the practices, ideas and symbols of his own Babylonian mystery religion. But in order to hold his followers, many of whom had witnessed God's true religion, he *claimed* to be an apostle of the true religion that Philip had brought. He *counterfeited* much of the truth taught by the true Church—stealing and then perverting it. Remember, he had followed Philip for days learning and studying the gospel.

"He appropriated the name of Christ," explained Mr. Armstrong. "He changed the name of his Babylonian religion to 'Christianity.' He offered free grace—forgiveness of sins—which no religion had ever offered. But he turned grace into license (Jude 4); he did away with God's law" (ibid).

Here is what the *New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary*

*of the English Language* states about Simon Magus: “Rebuked by Peter, he begged him to intercede with God on his behalf, and appears no more in Acts. Later literature showed him reappearing in Rome in the time of Claudius in a new movement of his own, curiously combining Christian and pagan elements, and in which he figured as God.” That is a powerful quote from *Webster’s*, a secular source.

This truth will surely come as a surprise to most readers: Mainstream Christianity today—which grew either directly or indirectly out of Catholicism—*is an outgrowth of the religion of Simon Magus*.

Of course, the Catholic Church vehemently rejects this history. Catholic history recognizes Simon Magus, but says that he was an apostate, a false Christian, and certainly not a man who was ever affiliated with the Catholic religion. The Catholic Church recognizes events recorded in Acts 8—but it inverts the history and teaches that the Catholic religion was the one Magus was trying to infiltrate, and that Philip and Peter were members of the Catholic Church.

How can we know who is right? Is the Catholic Church indeed the true Church of the New Testament—the religion Philip, Peter and John belonged to and that Magus attempted to infiltrate? Or is the Catholic Church the institution conceived by Simon Magus *after* he was rejected entrance into the true Church?

Finding the correct answer is not difficult. All we have to do is study the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. If those doctrines and practices align with the doctrines taught in the Bible and taught by Peter and the other apostles of the New Testament, then indeed the Catholic Church is the true Church. But if the

doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church cannot be found in the Bible and were not practiced by Jesus Christ and the first-century apostles, then clearly it received those false doctrines from someone else.

Go ahead: Look at some of the major doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church, and then take out your Bible and see if they were taught and practiced by Jesus, Peter and the true Church. Search the Scriptures for evidence of the divine mother-son relationship, the immortal soul, Catholic confession, the trinity, Sunday worship, Easter and Christmas—all fundamental Catholic doctrines.

*Not one is endorsed in the Bible or was practiced by Peter and the apostles.*

If these “Christian” beliefs are not in the Bible, then where did they come from?

Further study will prove the link between these false teachings and those promoted by Simon Magus. Adolf von Harnack, a German theologian and historian, wrote that Simon “proclaimed a doctrine in which the *Jewish faith* [referring to the religion of biblical Israel, given to that nation by God Himself and recorded in the Old Testament] was strangely and grotesquely mixed with *Babylonian myths*, together with some *Greek additions*. The mysterious worship ... in consequence of the widened horizon and the deepening religious feeling, finally the wild *syncretism* [that is, blending together of religious beliefs], whose aim, however, *was a universal religion*, all contributed to gain adherents for Simon” (*The History of Dogma*, Vol. 1).

This prominent theologian recognizes that Simon Magus created a false Christianity that was a blend of ancient Israel’s laws, Babylonian customs, and doctrines

stolen from the true Church and perverted to suit his own ambitions. Can you?

## A 'LOST CENTURY'

After rebranding and renaming his Babylonian mystery religion and successfully counterfeiting the religion of Peter and John, Simon Magus began a regional and eventually global campaign to market his brand of Christianity. "Before the end of the first century, his new universal (Catholic) religion had gained great strides," Mr. Armstrong wrote (op cit).

The hundred years between A.D. 70 and 170 was a critical period in the history both of God's true Church and of the one founded by Simon Magus. However, the record of that time is extremely sparse. "It's like a curtain had been rung down on that stage of history," Mr. Armstrong explained. "When that curtain lifts, a hundred years later, we see a 'Christian church' professing Christ, administering grace, but otherwise almost the very *antithesis* of the Church of Christ's apostles a hundred years before." What history does plainly show is that the Christianity of the late second century was *very different* from that of the original Christian Church.

Here is how Mr. Armstrong explained this phenomenon in his book *The Incredible Human Potential*: "[T]his Simon appropriated the NAME of Christ, calling his Babylonian mystery religion 'Christianity.' Satan moved this man and used him as his instrument to persecute and all but destroy the true Church of God. Before the end of the first century—probably by A.D. 70—he managed to suppress the message Christ had brought from God.





“There ensued ‘the lost century’ in the history of the true Church of God. There was a well-organized conspiracy to blot out all record of Church history during that period. A hundred years later, history reveals a ‘Christianity’ utterly unlike the Church Christ founded.”

Historians agree with Mr. Armstrong’s assessment. Edward Gibbon wrote in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, “The scanty ... materials of ecclesiastical history seldom enable us to dispel the cloud that hangs over the first age of the church.” And in his book *The Story of the Christian Church*, Jesse Lyman Hurlbut wrote, “For 50 years after St. Paul’s life a curtain hangs over the Church, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises about A.D. 120 with the writings of the earliest church fathers we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul.”

Thus, even secular historians recognize that the mainstream Christianity of the second century was different from that of the first-century Church—the Christianity established by Christ and taught by the apostles. They see that the main Christian Church of the second century *was not* the Church founded by Jesus Christ. It was different because it was not the true Church, but a different, *counterfeit* Christian religion.

The New Testament is full of evidence of this false Christianity emerging in the first century. For example, when the Apostle Paul wrote to his congregation in Galatia, stating, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ *unto another gospel*,” he was lamenting the loss of members to Simon Magus’s “Christian” church (Galatians 1:6).

Paul delivered a similar warning to the Corinthians:

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, *whom we have not preached*, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or *another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.*” About Magus’s ministers, Paul wrote, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-14).

The New Testament contains many such passages in which the apostles warned the true Church about Simon Magus and his deceptions. As Mr. Armstrong explained: “After A.D. 33, as the work of this Simon the sorcerer spread, the opposition to the true Church became Gentile [centered in Rome]. The writings of Paul, as well as 1 and 2 Peter, of James, of 1, 2 and 3 John and Jude show the Gentile opposition was primarily aimed against the law of God” (*The Plain Truth About Healing*).

## PETER THE FIRST POPE?

The Catholic Church teaches that the Apostle Peter was the first pope. The Petrine doctrine, which establishes the primacy of the pope, is a fundamental Catholic teaching. According to Catholic tradition, Peter moved to Rome around the same time that Simon Magus did, during the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius (A.D. 41–54).

According to the third-century Roman historian Eusebius, Simon Magus lived in Antioch for a while before traveling to Rome. Catholic historians Justin Martyr and Irenaeus also record that Simon journeyed to

Rome and gained great influence with Claudius. Catholic history says that the Apostle Peter, the leader of the true Church (Matthew 16:18), battled Simon Magus in Rome until Peter eventually destroyed Magus and augmented the Catholic Church as the sole religion of Rome.

As reasonable as this version of events may sound, it has a major flaw: The Bible does not mention even once that the Apostle Peter ever performed a work in Rome. In fact, plenty of evidence proves Peter never performed a work in Rome.

First, Christ's commission to Peter, outlined in Galatians 2:7, says that the chief apostle's work was to the Jews, not to Gentiles. Rome did not have many Jews. Second, in Romans 15:18, the Apostle Paul told the Gentile Romans that *he* was the apostle to the Gentiles, not Peter. Third, Romans 1:11 shows that *Paul*, not Peter, founded the church in Rome. Fourth, in Romans 16, Paul greets 28 individuals in Rome by name, and he doesn't mention Peter. (How rude of Paul to blatantly ignore Peter, the chief apostle.) Fifth, the Bible clearly indicates that Peter spent his early ministry in Jerusalem. This is logical, considering Peter was the chief apostle and would have worked out of headquarters, which was in Jerusalem.

Search high and low and you will never find a jot of evidence that the Apostle Peter ever performed a great work in Rome. So if Simon Peter did not do the work of the Church there, then who did? Who is the "St. Peter" that Catholics believe established the "Christian" church in that ancient city? Who was the first pope?

It was, in truth, the Gentile Samaritan with a long record of selling himself as "some great one"—Simon Magus.

## MAGUS'S RELIGION GROWS

The Bible shows that the Apostle Paul struggled to hold back the heresy of Simon Magus as it poured into the Greek world in the latter half of the first century. When Paul died, an enormous number of true Church members defected to Magus's religion.

Meanwhile, back in Rome, the successors of Simon Magus ("St. Peter") continued to steadily lay the foundation of his universal "Christian" empire. We know very little about Pope Clement I, a late-first-century pontiff (roughly A.D. 88–97). However, a letter from him to the church in Corinth is believed to be genuine. In this letter he asserts his authority over the church, and specifically the appointing of bishops. The writings of Irenaeus indicate Pope Sixtus (also spelled Xystus), who ruled around A.D. 120, was the first pope to observe the pagan festival of Easter instead of the Passover, which Jesus and the apostles kept.

The issue of Passover versus Easter emerged as a major point of contention between the true Church and the religion promoted by Simon Magus's successors. Pope Sixtus and those who followed him tolerated Passover observance, though they insisted that those in Rome keep Easter.

Around A.D. 150, Pope Anicetus began leading the church in Rome. Irenaeus records that Polycarp, a disciple of John, traveled to Rome to confront Anicetus on Passover observance. Though Polycarp failed to convince the pope to change, Anicetus continued to tolerate Polycarp's beliefs. Polycarp could do nothing to stop Anicetus's heresy, and its prevalence grieved him greatly. *Encyclopedia Britannica* says, "The steady progress of the heretical movement in spite of all

opposition was a cause of deep sorrow to Polycarp, so that in the last years of his life the words were constantly on his lips, ‘Oh good God, to what times hast thou spared me, that I must suffer (tolerate) such things!’”

Polycarp was martyred shortly after his confrontation with Anicetus. In the days of Polycarp’s successor, Polycrates, the disagreement grew more heated. When Victor I became pope around A.D. 190, he ended the Catholic Church’s tolerance of Passover observance. He excommunicated Polycrates, and the biblically commanded observance of Passover was steadily stamped out and replaced with the pagan Easter.

The Easter controversy demonstrated the strength of Rome’s leadership. The church established by Magus had emerged as the clear leader of the “Christian” world. During the first, second and third centuries, Magus’s successors worked hard to ensure that the church in Rome presented a united front. Dissenters were marginalized. The early popes used Rome’s location at the center of the Roman Empire to develop relationships with prominent Roman leaders and build political influence. Rome quickly became the wealthiest of the “Christian” congregations.

The Roman church used its riches to buy authority, just as Simon Magus had tried to do. Paul Johnson writes in his book *A History of Christianity*, “From the earliest times, [Rome] had assisted small and struggling churches with money. This was charity, but charity, increasingly, with a purpose. ... The Rome congregation was rich, and became much richer during the second century. ... *With Roman money there went a gentle but persistent pressure to conform to Roman standards.*”

By now the *true* Christian Church—the one established

by Christ that taught the law and practiced the Sabbath and Passover—found itself increasingly isolated and persecuted. In the eyes of the Roman leaders, and almost all “Christians,” the “Christianity” of Magus was now the true church and supreme religious authority. Despite Catholicism’s distinct pagan practices, “Christians” throughout the region came to view it as the true religion.

“Many Christians did not make a clear distinction between this sun cult and their own,” writes Johnson. “They referred to Christ ‘driving His chariot across the sky’; they held their services on Sunday, knelt towards the east and had their nativity feast on 25 December, the birthday of the sun at the winter solstice” (ibid).

True Christians, those who refused to keep the pagan practices and strove to uphold the seventh-day Sabbath and the biblically commanded holy days, became targets. Rome passed laws against Christianity, *but they were not often enforced against the mainstream believers*. In fact, as Johnson notes, “the state tended to strengthen the orthodox elements in the church by concentrating its savagery on the antinomian elements among Christians.” In other words, smaller Christian groups that weren’t part of the larger, more “mainstream Christianity” established by Magus were persecuted.

By A.D. 250, the church at Rome had enough wealth to support a bishop and over 150 employees. It owned a large amount of gold, silver, precious ornaments, clothes and food. As time passed and Magus’s religion grew, Johnson writes that “Christianity” had “changed and had *made itself* a potential ally” of Rome (ibid).

As an ally of the state, the Roman Catholic Church was now in a position to start shaping and molding the Roman Empire.

## RELIGION OF THE EMPIRE

By the fourth century, Magus's "Christianity" had positioned itself to begin to strike a lasting alliance with the Roman Empire. It did this by actually configuring itself as a religious reflection of that great political and military power that was the Roman Empire.

"Long before the fall of Rome [during the reign of Leo I] there had begun to grow up within the Roman Empire an ecclesiastical state [government], which in its constitution and its administrative system was shaping itself upon the imperial model," wrote Philip Von Ness Myers in his authoritative work, *Ancient History*.

Notice that: The Catholic Church shaped itself after the Roman model.

Paul Johnson explains it this way: "In the long struggle to suppress internal division, to codify its doctrine and to expand its frontiers, *Christianity had become in many striking ways a mirror image of the empire itself*. ... It was administered by a professional class of literates who in some ways functioned like bureaucrats and its bishops, like imperial governors, legates or prefects, had wide discretionary powers to interpret the law. It was becoming the *doppelgänger* of the empire. ... Christianity had become a secular as well as a spiritual phenomenon" (op cit).

Now consider that powerful conclusion (by an excellent historian) in light of what the Apostle John wrote about the Catholic Church in Revelation 13: "And [it] deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, *that they should make an image to the beast*, which had the wound by a sword, and did live" (verse 14).

This prophecy is explained further in Chapter 9. As Herbert Armstrong taught, and is easily proved, the “beast” here is the Roman Empire. The Apostle John here is prophesying that the Roman Catholic Church would actually model itself, organizationally and institutionally, into the “image of the beast,” or the Roman Empire!

Revelation 17 says that this “woman,” or church, fornicates with the “kings of the earth”; in other words, this church becomes intertwined with the state. Paul Johnson writes, “Would it not be prudent for the state to recognize this welcome metamorphosis [of the church] and contract, as it were, a *marriage de convenance* with the ‘bride of Christ’?” (ibid).

During the second and third centuries, Simon Magus’s false “Christianity” developed and augmented its religious and spiritual identity, and expanded its membership and material assets. By the fourth century, and the arrival of a certain Roman emperor, Catholicism was mature enough to begin to be made the state religion of the Roman Empire. This emperor was Constantine.

Constantine, who ruled from A.D. 306 until his death in 337, recognized Catholicism as an ideal partner of the Roman Empire. As a devotee of the sun cult, his religion was already similar to Catholicism. Constantine’s father had also been pro-“Christian.” Constantine claimed that his conversion occurred when God intervened to help him with the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, where he secured his rulership over the Roman Empire. But he held “Christian” sympathies before that. Constantine was a megalomaniac who realized that by accepting “Christianity” he could rule a religion as well as an empire. (Constantine made sure that after his death he would be buried in a monument at the head of 12 other memo-

rials to the apostles. He considered himself the chief.)

In 313, Constantine the Great, as he is known today, issued the Edict of Milan. This supreme ruling made tolerance of “Christianity” (that is, *Magus’s* “Christianity”) mandatory throughout the Roman Empire. Under this edict, the Catholic Church was allowed to own property. The emperor actively promoted “Christianity.”

In 325, Constantine presided over the Council of Nicaea. At this pivotal gathering of secular and religious leaders, Constantine presided over the establishment of the Catholic hierarchy as the official head of the church. This council formally established the trinity—a pagan teaching brought over from the Babylonian religion into false Christianity by Simon Magus—as official church doctrine. It also legally established Easter, a day named after the pagan goddess Astarte, as a Catholic holiday in place of the biblical Passover.

The reign of Emperor Constantine, and the developments of the Council of Nicaea in particular, was a major milestone for the Catholic religion. Now that it had the official backing of the mighty Roman Empire, its destiny to be a global religion was assured.

It was also a major milestone for those who disagreed with the Catholic Church. After the Council of Nicaea, the Roman Empire began to confiscate the property of any who kept the true Passover. In 347, the state began killing Catholicism’s Donatist enemies—a North African group that opposed the church’s alignment with Rome. As Johnson notes, the Roman Empire had become “the enforcement agency of Christian orthodoxy” (ibid). (By the reign of Theodosius in the fourth century, the Roman Empire had over 100 statutes against heresy.)

Just as John prophesied, the Catholic Church was

beginning to use the Roman Empire (the “beast,” in biblical terms) to marginalize, persecute and eventually put to death those who rejected Catholic teaching.

Emperor Constantine had made Sunday a civil day of rest in 321. In 365, at the Council of Laodicea, the contention over Sunday worship was settled more formally with the enforcement of Sunday—a Babylonian day of sun worship—as the Lord’s Day [referring to Sunday] throughout the Roman Empire. The Council of Laodicea concluded: “Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring the Lord’s Day, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found Judaizing, let them be anathema from Christ.”

In other words, *those who kept the Sabbath on Saturday were branded heretics deserving of death.*

As Johnson explains, when the Catholic Church became the official religion of Rome, it soon “transformed itself from a suffering and victimized body, begging for toleration, into a coercive one, demanding monopoly” (op cit).

Backed by the Roman Empire, Catholicism quickly became the moral and spiritual compass directing the Roman Empire, which by this time stretched from the Middle East and North Africa all the way to the shores of Britain, and encompassed virtually all of Europe.

Simon Magus would have been overjoyed. His dream of a Catholic religion joining forces with secular governments to create a new, universal religion and empire was coming to fruition.

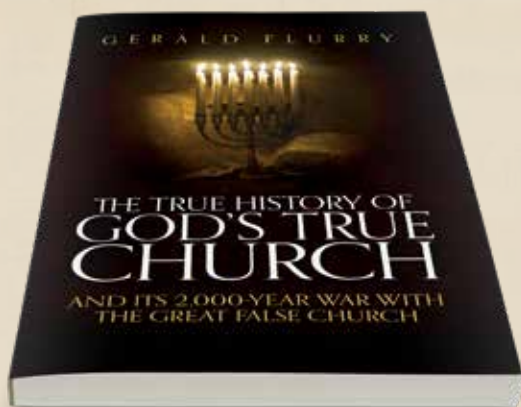
With Catholicism now concretely fixed as the official religion of the Roman Empire, the “holy” in Holy Roman Empire was in place.

## THE TRUE HISTORY OF GOD'S TRUE CHURCH

---

**R**EVELATION 17:6 REVEALS THE *REAL REASON* FOR THE creation of the Roman Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire. This great “woman,” or religion, is “drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” This same “woman” is discussed in Daniel 7:25, which says this institution “shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High ....”

The great false religion of Revelation 17 exists to oppose God, to destroy His Work, and to persecute and destroy the true saints of God. She and the beast she rides are inspired and led by Satan the devil, who is the real source of all hatred against God's saints. This woman



and beast are the primary tool the devil uses to try to *destroy the true Church of God*. In fact, the existence of this church-state combine actually revolves around the presence on Earth of God's true Church!

Where is God's true Church today? One way to find it is to look for a small church that has routinely been persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church.

You need to know who this small but faithful group is and to learn more about its history and future. Request now your free copy of *The True History of God's True Church—and Its 2,000-Year War With the Great False Church*. Written by Gerald Flurry, this powerful book provides an in-depth look into the history of God's true Church.

two

---

# JUSTINIAN AND THE IMPERIAL RESTORATION

“Through Justinian’s Imperial Restoration in  
A.D. 554, the Catholic Church revived the empire!  
That church then guided all the resurrections  
of that empire that followed.”

—GERALD FLURRY

**B**Y THE END OF THE FIFTH CENTURY, THE ROMAN Empire appeared dead. It had lost most of its territories in North Africa, the Middle East and Western Europe. Rome, the capital, had been sacked by the Goths in A.D. 476. The empire's economy was in ruin, its leadership had been gutted, and it was commanded by foreigners.

The destruction was inflicted by barbarian tribes from the north and east. Through the course of the fifth century, Rome had been ruled, in sequence, by three different Germanic tribes. These tribes didn't just destroy Rome's secular leadership; they also overthrew the bishop of Rome and his religion.

Despite its loss of power and prestige, the Roman Catholic Church—and its ambition of becoming a universal religion ruling over a world-ruling empire—did not die. The religion and its aspirations remained alive and well in one place in particular: Constantinople.

But how would the Catholic Church return to its place atop Europe?

In A.D. 527, a formidable and ambitious emperor came on the scene in Constantinople, the capital of the eastern Roman Empire, known also as the Byzantine Empire. Emperor Justinian I considered himself a Roman Caesar. He considered it his duty to purge the western territories of the Germanic tribes, to reconquer Rome, and to reunite the eastern and western legs of the Roman Empire. His motto says it all: "One empire, one church, one law."

And he lived it. Over the next two decades, the former Roman Empire became his state, the Roman constitution his law, and *Roman Catholicism his religion*. And those who got in his way or opposed him were eliminated—quickly, painfully and by the thousands.

## RESTORING CATHOLICISM

Justinian had a vision of empire grander than any other ruler in the previous 200 years. “More than any emperor since Constantine, he believed himself charged with a mission to redeem the world,” writes Tom Holland in his bestselling book *In the Shadow of the Sword*. He was “an emperor as forceful, energetic and egotistical as any in Roman history.”

Catholic authorities convinced Justinian that in order to win battles and restore the empire, he needed God on his side. And the path to God’s heart, they said, was to purge the empire of paganism and heretics. “Help me to destroy the heretics, and I will help you to destroy the Persians,” Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, told one of Justinian’s predecessors.

Justinian obeyed and immediately set about ridding the land of all forms of non-Catholic religion. By command of the emperor, the law stated, “We order all those who follow this law to assume the name of Catholic Christians, and considering others as demented and insane, we order that they shall bear the infamy of heresy; and when the divine vengeance which they merit has been appeased, *they shall afterwards be punished in accordance with our resentment, which we have acquired from the judgment of heaven ...*” (emphasis added throughout).

Under Justinian, an individual was either Catholic or a heathen. Laws were created to destroy the heathen. One states, “Let those who do not accept those doctrines cease to apply the name of true religion to their fraudulent belief; and let them be branded with their open crimes, and, having been removed from the threshold of all churches, be utterly excluded from them, as we forbid all heretics to hold unlawful assemblies

within cities. If, however, any seditious outbreak should be attempted, we order them to be driven outside the walls of the city *with relentless violence*, and we direct that all Catholic churches throughout the entire world shall be placed under the control of the orthodox bishops who have embraced the Nicene Creed.”

Jews who owned a Christian slave were put to death. Together, Justinian and the Catholic Church banned all non-Christian places of worship, including synagogues, even as far away as North Africa. Jews were forbidden from celebrating Passover. “As no preceding sovereign had been so much interested in church affairs, so none seems to have shown so much activity as a persecutor both of pagans and of heretics,” the 1911 edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica* reads. Justinian “renewed with additional stringency the laws against both these classes.”

The historian Procopius, a contemporary of Justinian, wrote in his *Secret History*, “Now among the Christians in the entire Roman Empire, there are many with dissenting doctrines, which are called heresies by the established church: such as those of the Montanists and Sabbatians, and whatever others cause the minds of men to wander from the true path. All of these beliefs [Justinian] ordered to be abolished, and their place taken by the orthodox dogma: threatening, among the punishments for disobedience, loss of the heretic’s right to will property to his children or other relatives .... *Agents were sent everywhere to force whomever they chanced upon to renounce the faith of their fathers.* ... Thus many perished at the hands of the persecuting faction ....”

Justinian’s persecution was so thorough that some were driven to commit suicide. “The Montanists, who dwelt in Phrygia, shut themselves up in their churches,

set them on fire, and ascended to glory in the flames,” Procopius wrote. Under this church-state alliance, “the whole Roman Empire was a scene of massacre and flight.”

“Killing,” wrote Procopius, “in the opinion of Justinian, was hardly to be ranked as murder, if those who died did not share his beliefs.” Justinian took the persecution of heretics to a historically unprecedented level. Under Constantine, they were exiled and some were killed. Under Justinian, they were killed by the thousands.

## RESTORING PAPAL AUTHORITY

The joint quest to purge the land of heretics and pagans helped to formalize the church-state partnership that began with Constantine. “The process of integration of church and state, begun by Constantine, continued until the two became inseparable,” writes Paul Johnson in *A History of Christianity*. “The Byzantine Empire became, in effect, a form of theocracy, with the emperor performing priestly and semidivine functions, and the Orthodox Church constituting a department of state in charge of spiritual affairs.”

Emperor Justinian also restored the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church, including the supreme authority of the pope. One of the fundamental aims of Justinian’s ecclesiastical policy from the beginning was to establish a close alliance with the pope of Rome, who, despite Rome’s subjugation by the Goths, was widely considered the leader of the church.

Justinian knew that in order to restore the Roman Empire, he needed the endorsement of the bishop of Rome. In one of his letters to the pope, Justinian addressed him as the “head of all holy churches.” In one of his novels, Emperor Justinian stated that “the most blessed see of

the archbishop of Constantinople, the New Rome, *rank[s] second after the most holy apostolic see of Old Rome*" (Alexander Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*).

The bishop of Rome inherited the scholars and the scholarship of the Roman Empire. Paul Johnson explains, "The fact that the bishopric of Rome had an accurate and authoritative list of saints, and scientific dating and calendarizing, and had a reference system, with authorities, for all questions which impinged on church doctrine, practice and discipline, was an immeasurable advantage in dealing with bishoprics all over the West; they increasingly looked to Rome not just because they venerated St. Peter and his shrine, but because Rome knew the answers" (op cit).

Justinian was emperor in the East, but the ultimate religious authority resided among the seven mountains of Rome!

## RELIGION IN LAW

Catholicism's influence over Justinian's empire went far beyond religion. After the emperor reinstated Catholicism as the state religion, he and the church jointly set about establishing the laws of the land.

"During the fourth century, the church had become increasingly involved in the law-making process," Johnson writes. "Much of the first great collection of laws, the mid-fifth-century Theodosian Code, was of the church's making. *There was, of course, no distinction between secular and ecclesiastical law*; in administering and transmitting the one, the church automatically made known the other" (ibid).

Between A.D. 529 and 534, Justinian issued a state constitution for his revived Roman Empire. This over-

arching document was called *Corpus Juris Civilis*, also known as the Code of Justinian. It was based on the laws of Rome, laws largely written by the Catholic Church. This new legal standard elevated Roman Catholicism to the level of state religion and outlawed religious practices and assemblies of any other kind.

It also enshrined the strategic relationship between pope and emperor into a legal framework. The pope proclaimed the emperor as the one, true ruler of the Roman Empire, and in turn the emperor defended the Roman Catholic religion from all outside threats.

This body of Roman laws became the legal cornerstone of Justinian's empire—and of all the Holy Roman resurrections to come after him.

Even today, European law and justice are rooted in the Code of Justinian. "For more than 2,000 years, Roman law has guided the destinies of the civilized nations and many of the barbarous peoples in the world," wrote Cary R. Alburn, a lawyer from the Ohio Bar, in the *American Bar Association Journal*. "Since the days of Magna Charta, the realm of jurisprudence has been ruled by two great legal systems, the Roman and the English." He summarized Justinian's work, saying: "This compilation of Justinian consolidated Roman law for the thousand years preceding him and formed the foundation of most of the later legal codes throughout the world."

But remember: Emperor Justinian's foundation was built largely by the Catholic Church!

## RECONQUERING ROME

Catholic influence infused every part of Justinian's government, even its foreign policy. Justinian's laws enforced the spread of Catholicism within his realm, but he also looked

to spread it abroad. “For the first time in Roman history, the conversion of pagan kings became enshrined as a priority of state,” writes Tom Holland (op cit).

“The church, of course, had been ambitious to plant the cross on the furthestmost reaches of the world” since its inception, Holland continues. “That the Roman state had a duty to contribute to this mission was, however, a more radical presumption.”

The year after Justinian finished codifying his new constitution, he set his sights on reconquering the territory of the former Roman Empire. Now that he had made Roman Catholicism the official religion of his empire, it was imperative to ensure that the chief seat of that religion, Rome, was part of his realm.

In A.D. 535, internal turmoil broke out in the Ostrogoth kingdom reigning over Italy. Emperor Justinian decided to use this turmoil to initiate a war to reunite the empire. With the pope of Rome offering political support, Justinian dispatched one of his armies and his most gifted general, Belisarius, to the south of Italy. Within five years, King Vitiges of the Ostrogoths had been captured and most of Italy conquered. The Ostrogoths rallied several more times. In the end, however, the bloodstained garments of the last Ostrogoth leader were sent to Constantinople and laid at the feet of Justinian as visible proof of his demise.

After almost 20 years of warfare, Emperor Justinian had retaken Italy, as well as Dalmatia and Sicily—and *resurrected the Roman Empire*.

Emperor Justinian made this Imperial Restoration official in A.D. 554 with an edict known as the Pragmatic Sanction. This edict restored all the lands the Ostrogoths had taken from the Roman Catholic Church back to



Vatican control. It also returned to the pope and his Vatican hierarchy all the rights, powers and privileges that they enjoyed before the barbarian invasions of Rome. Both halves of the empire were now united. For the first time in history, the Roman Catholic Church was ruling over the state, instead of the state controlling the church. The deadly wound inflicted by the Goths was healed and the first resurrection of the “Holy” Roman Empire had begun (see “The Deadly ‘Wound,’” page 188).



## ENTERING THE VALLEY

Justinian's revival of the Roman Empire was short-lived. Within a few years of his death, the Byzantine hold over Italy began to crumble. The Lombards invaded mainland Italy, and the Byzantines were only able to hold cities on the coast. The Italian peninsula was once again fragmented.

Although the Imperial Restoration had ended and Italy was largely disintegrated, one core institution continued to perpetuate its law and lifestyle. The

*Catholic* religion, the essence of Justinian's restoration and the former Roman Empire, remained alive and well.

Over the next two centuries, the Catholic Church, operating from Rome, remained an influential force in Italy and Western Europe. Most importantly, the flame of the Roman Empire was kept ablaze in the Vatican and in the minds of popes and Catholic leaders. The Vatican patiently watched and waited, knowing that the opportunity to resurrect the Roman Empire would eventually come.

From the fifth through seventh centuries, Germanic tribes gained control over northern and western Europe—the territory of what was once the western empire. Though these tribes rejected Roman government, remarkably, *many converted to Rome's religion*. Moreover, the political power vacuum in Western Europe gave the Roman church a chance to, as Paul Johnson writes, create society “in its own Christian image” (op cit).

As Catholicism was embraced throughout the former empire, the church saw opportunities to exert its influence. Western Europe was devoid of moral and political authority and leadership, leaving the Catholic Church as the only organized, wealthy and sophisticated organization.

The following statement by Paul Johnson is remarkable. Many cities throughout the empire survived the collapse of the Imperial Restoration “with *the Catholic bishop as their chief inhabitant and decision-maker*,” Johnson writes. “He organized the defenses, ran the market economy, presided over justice, negotiated with other cities and rulers. ... In some cases, the bishops organized ‘civilized’ resistance against the ‘invaders.’ Far

more often, however, they negotiated with them and in time came to act as their advisers.”

Lacking strong political leadership, it was left to the Roman Catholic Church to develop and uphold the rule of law and train and educate Europe’s uneducated. Johnson continues: “As pagan societies, all the tribal confederations possessed vast and ancient bodies of customary law, not written but memorized, and slowly and occasionally altered in the light of changing needs. When the church came into contact with these barbarian societies, and induced them to accept baptism or, in the case of Arians, full communion with Rome, its bishops almost immediately set up arrangements to link Christian legal customs with existing pagan law codes.”

Europe was not at this moment being ruled by a centralized political government from Rome, but it was still being *created in the shape and form of the Roman Empire*. By whom? By the Vatican and by thousands of Roman Catholic bishops scattered across Europe.

Johnson gives the example of the laws of the Lombard King Rothari, called Rothari’s Edict. This was written not in Lombardic, but in Latin, the language of Rome. Some material was copied directly from Justinian’s code of laws. “In this code, in fact, there are not only Roman elements but a formal foundation in Roman law,” he writes. “Rothari was an Arian; but his court had clearly been infiltrated by Catholic clergy, and his code indicates that his political and legal thinking was moving on a moral level which was plainly the result of Christian influence.”

The church also took charge of the writing of history. “If the church was identified with the future in the minds of the barbarians, it also established itself as the custodian and interpreter of their past,” Johnson

continues. “[T]he church possessed from the start a monopoly of the writing of history. This was absolutely central to its success in making so deep an impression on Dark Age society.”

Catholic clerics recorded the oral traditions of the tribes. In feudal Europe, Catholic monks and clerics were the scribes to kings and lords, responsible for writing and storing the important records. Men increasingly began to view the history of their nation through the lens of the Catholic Church. Early medieval Europeans were taught to view their tribes’ conversion to Catholicism as the moment they transitioned from darkness to light.

The church carried the learning and knowledge of the past into the post-Roman world. Monasteries became the repositories of ancient know-how, and they transmitted it to medieval Europe. With no central political power to lead, the church had a monopoly on Europe’s culture and education. “This presented the church with a unique opportunity to capture society by its roots. It had the chance *not merely to establish a stranglehold on education, but to re-create the whole process and content and purpose of education in a Christian setting*,” Johnson writes.

The foundation of that education was devised by Isidore, a powerful Catholic bishop. This became “the basis for all teaching in the West for about 800 years,” writes Johnson. Isidore’s works “determined educational method, as well as content, from the primary to the university level. Everything taught thereafter was no more than an elaboration of what he wrote: *It was impossible for the medieval mind to break out of his system.*” His work was based on the foundation of the ancient world, and it was through the Catholic Church that these ideas reached the modern world.

Today we take for granted the freedom with which we can access knowledge in books, on the Internet, at universities. In medieval Europe, formal education was rare; even books were extremely scarce. Most people couldn't read or write anyway. The chief repository of knowledge, secular and religious, was the Catholic priest and the local abbey.

The church also carried practical knowledge from the ruins of Rome. As the descendants of Rome's leading families, the bishops were skilled landowners and experts in estate management. "In barbarian eyes, churchmen were 'modern' farmers, who kept accounts, planned ahead, invested," writes Johnson. "Together, bishoprics and abbacies constituted the core of the agricultural economy of Europe. Bishops and abbots were the innovatory elite of society."

The monks "saved agriculture when nobody else could save it," said Henry Goodell, president of Massachusetts Agricultural College. "They practiced it under a new life and new conditions when no one else dared to undertake it." Johann Lorenz von Mosheim of the Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern said, "Wherever they came, they converted the wilderness into a cultivated country: They pursued the breeding of cattle and agriculture, labored with their own hands, drained morasses, and cleared away forests. ... By them, Germany was cultivated and rendered a fruitful country."

Truly, the influence of the Catholic Church on European history is much more extensive than what most people know. Today we underestimate the extent—right down to the smallest details—to which Europe was built by the Catholic Church!

## SEEKING ANOTHER CHAMPION

Although they wielded considerable spiritual, moral and cultural influence in the sixth through eighth centuries, Catholic authorities knew that in order to attain universal supremacy, they needed help from a political and military power. The Vatican needed another Justinian, another powerful personality it could inspire and guide in another crusade to unite Europe and resurrect the ancient Roman Empire.

Pope Gregory I was the first to start creating this champion in the seventh century. Here is how Johnson describes Gregory's effort: "The future, he thought, lay with the 'emerging nations' north of the Alps. The job of the bishop of Rome was to bring them into Christianity, to integrate them with the ecclesiastical system. It was no use lamenting the empire. 'The eagle,' he wrote, 'has gone bald and lost his feathers. ... Where is the Senate, where are the old people of Rome? Gone.' ... Gregory preached a basic evangelical religion, shorn of classical complexity and elegance; and he sent his monks to teach it to wild, coarse Germanic-speaking warriors with long hair and the future in their strong arms" (op cit).

Pope Gregory initiated an alliance with the "emerging nations north of the Alps" that would coalesce on and off for the next thousand years. By the middle of the eighth century, with the Germanic tribes of northern Europe now embracing Catholicism, the Vatican was positioned to exploit the man who would resurrect the Roman Empire and forever be regarded as the father of European unification.

## THE CATHOLIC CALENDAR

---

ONE DRAMATIC MEASURE OF THE CATHOLIC religion's global influence is its control over the definition and measurement of time itself. Even today, though the presence of Catholicism doesn't seem as ubiquitous as it once was, we continue to live by a calendar largely created by the popes of old: the Gregorian calendar—named after Pope Gregory XIII. That calendar revolves around fixing the date of Easter in line with the spring equinox, ensuring that the Catholic's pagan festivals fall at the right time relative to Earth's revolution around the sun.

This calendar is based on the Julian calendar, the Roman calendar established in 45 B.C. by Julius Caesar. He chose the names and lengths of the months that we still use today (except July and August, which were renamed after Julius and Augustus). But the Julian calendar was later altered by the Vatican.

Here is what is truly amazing: God actually *prophesied* that the Catholic Church would change time itself!

Read the prophecy in Daniel 7:24-25. Here God is talking about the “little horn,” the Catholic Church. (This is thoroughly proved in Chapter 9.) “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, *and think to change times and laws*: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

What is the Catholic Church’s motive for changing the way mankind measures time? The first half of verse 25 provides the answer: It is an attempt to destroy—by removing from mankind’s memory—the knowledge about God’s true holy days and the Sabbath.

Think deeply about the following quote by Herbert W. Armstrong from *Pagan Holidays—or God’s Holy Days—Which?*

Among these 10 kingdoms which have ruled in the Western world since the fall of Rome to the present, appeared another “little horn,” whose “look was more stout than his fellows.” In other words, another government, actually smaller, yet dominating over all the others. Students of prophecy recognize this “little horn” as a great religious hierarchy. And in the 25th verse of this prophecy, it is stated that this hierarchy shall “think to change *times and laws*.”

This same power is mentioned again in the 17th chapter of Revelation, here pictured as ruling over the kings and kingdoms of the Earth, persecuting the true saints.

IN EVERY POSSIBLE MANNER, THIS POWER HAS CHANGED TIME!

God begins the days at sunset, but “the little horn” has changed it so the world now

begins the day in the middle of the night by a man-made watch.

God begins the week with the ending of the true Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, but the world begins the working week in the middle of the night, the second day of the week.

God begins the months with the new moons, but this “little horn” has induced the world to begin the months according to a clumsy man-made calendar of heathen origin.

God begins the year in the early spring, when new life is budding in nature everywhere, but ancient heathen Rome caused the world to begin the year in the middle of dead winter.

God gave His children a true rest day, designed to keep them continually in the knowledge and true worship of the true God—a memorial of God’s creation—the seventh day of the week. But the “little horn” has fastened upon a deluded world the observance of the days on which the pagans worshiped the sun, the first day of the week, called Sunday.

three

---

# CHARLEMAGNE— FOREFATHER OF MODERN EUROPE

“We do possess a European symbol which belongs to all nations equally. This is the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, which embodies the tradition of Charlemagne.”

—OTTO VON HABSBURG

**B**Y THE EARLY EIGHTH CENTURY, CATHOLICISM WAS well established as the most dominant religion in Western Europe. Despite its significant spiritual and cultural penetration, the Vatican was still a long way from uniting Europe politically and fulfilling its supreme ambition of resurrecting the Roman Empire. To do that, Rome would need a military and political partner.

Rome still had an alliance with Byzantium. But the Byzantines were under pressure from Islam and not in a position to be a Roman Catholic weapon. Rome needed a new partner.

Within a few decades, the Vatican had found its man. He was an exceptional military leader and an astute ruler. He adored the legacy of ancient Rome and was enthusiastic about its restoration in Europe. Most importantly, he was an avid Roman Catholic.

His name was Charles. He would soon be called Charlemagne—Charles the Great.

Although he died well over a thousand years ago, the life and work of this eighth-century Frankish king are revered to this day. The Imperial Crown of the Holy Roman Empire, created by Otto the Great in the late 10th century, is called the Crown of Charlemagne. Napoleon was hailed as “Charlemagne reborn.” Adolf Hitler was a faithful student of Charlemagne’s vision of Europe, and even built his famous Eagle’s Nest next to the mountain where, according to legend, Charlemagne is sleeping and will someday rise again. Out of adoration for the ancient monarch, European leaders, when deciding how to create a single currency, met in Aachen, Charlemagne’s capital. Each year, the city of Aachen awards one prominent individual for “distinguished service on behalf of European unification” with one of Europe’s most illustrious honors: the Charlemagne Prize.

Why the fascination with a long-dead emperor? Who was he? What was the true nature of his achievements? Most importantly, considering that contemporary European Union leaders want to emulate his accomplishment, *how* did Charlemagne unite the divided Continent?

## A POLITICAL ALLIANCE

Before Charlemagne's emergence, Europe was fragmented. The territory that is now France, Germany and the Low Countries was split among many tribes. Much of Italy was occupied by the Lombards. Byzantium was recognized as the successor to the eastern region of the old Roman Empire.

In northwestern Europe, the region of France today, the Franks had been the first tribe to embrace Catholicism. The Franks first did so for political gain rather than for religious reasons. Mostly of Germanic origin, the Franks exploited the support of the Catholic Church to further their expansionist policies. Never one to miss an opportunity, the Vatican relied on Frankish rulers for protection. It was a union based on politics alone.

The seeds of Charlemagne's relationship with the Catholic Church were sown by his grandfather, Charles Martel. The relationship essentially began in A.D. 732, after Martel defeated the Muslim armies of Abdul Rahman al-Ghafiqi that were attempting to invade Europe through Spain. Following Martel's victory in the Battle of Tours-Poitiers, the Vatican hailed Charles as the savior of Christendom, despite the fact that he had seized land and money from the church. The Vatican saw Martel's victory over the Muslims as an opportunity.

Charles Martel, despite his power as ruler of the Franks, was more of a tribal ruler than a king. That changed with his son Pepin. It is a fact long forgotten,

but the Vatican was the indispensable power behind the rise of Charlemagne's Frankish kingdom. Pepin became king after he wrote the pope and asked whether or not the Frankish King Childeric III was truly the rightful king. The pope ruled that Childeric's kingship was illegal, thereby giving Pepin the spiritual cover needed to imprison the man—in a monastery, no less.

In 751, with papal endorsement, Catholic bishops anointed Pepin king of the Franks in a ceremony copied from the coronations of kings David and Solomon. Three years later, the pope personally repeated the ceremony. For the first time in European history, the Roman Catholic Church claimed the authority to make kings. Later it would be emperors.

It is hard to overstate the impact of the relationship between the Vatican and the Frankish kingdom under Charlemagne and his forbearers. "Phrases like 'revolutionary happenings,' a 'decisive moment in European history' are easy to write, less easy to justify," writes historian Donald Bullough in his book *The Age of Charlemagne*. "Yet the direct involvement of the bishop of Imperial Rome in a change of royal dynasty among a Germanic people, the association of a religious ceremony with the making of a king, and the unavoidable political consequences of a closer link between the papacy and the largest of the Romano-Germanic kingdoms, surely warrant such language even if the son and successor of Pepin had not turned out to be the man he was."

By ordaining Pepin king of the Franks, the church had secured an ally. And under Pepin's son Charlemagne, this alliance would forever ensure that Europe was a Catholic continent—through violence and war yet unprecedented in that land.

## THE RISE OF CHARLEMAGNE

In 755, at the pope's request, King Pepin led his Frankish army into Italy. Pepin quickly defeated the Lombards, and in the process secured Vatican territory and removed the Lombard threat against the pope. Pepin died soon after, and his empire was divided between his two sons, Charlemagne and Carloman. Three years later, Carloman died, leaving Charlemagne the sole king of the Franks.

In 774, with the Frankish kingdom firmly consolidated, Charlemagne made a brief trip to Italy to aid the pope. After safeguarding the Vatican, Charlemagne and his army set off to conquer Europe. He spent the next 25 years pursuing his goal of subjugating the tribes of Europe and forging Europe into a united Catholic continent.

"The first three decades of Charlemagne's reign were dominated by military campaigns," *Encyclopedia Britannica* explains, "which were prompted by a variety of factors: the need to defend his realm against external foes and internal separatists, a desire for conquest and booty, a keen sense of opportunities offered by changing power relationships, and *an urge to spread Christianity*" (emphasis added throughout).

One by one, the tribes of Europe fell to Charlemagne and his Catholic hammer. But one tribe held out against the Catholic crusaders. Situated in north-central Europe, the Saxons clung to their faith and refused to acquiesce to Charlemagne as he tried to impose Roman Catholicism.

Charlemagne was enraged. His determination to convert the Saxons to Catholicism intensified. For years the Saxons resisted, fighting the Catholic armies whenever and wherever possible. In one conflict, Charlemagne executed 4,500 Saxon prisoners. But his barbarism only strengthened the Saxons' fortitude.

During Charlemagne's reign, tens of thousands of Saxons were forced to be baptized into the Catholic faith. Strict laws enforcing Catholic worship were enacted throughout Charlemagne's European empire. The penalty for cremating someone, the old pagan way, was death. In contrast, the penalty for murder was to pay compensation to the man's family—provided, of course, the murdered man wasn't a priest. All children had to be baptized before they were a year old. Unauthorized public meetings were outlawed—making it illegal to keep the Sabbath on Saturday.

Over the course of more than 30 years, many thousands of Saxons were executed for their religious beliefs. It took at least 18 conquests, but Charles finally prevailed: The Saxon people were forced to either convert to Catholicism and subject themselves to Charlemagne and the pope, or be killed.

As emperor of the “Holy” Roman Empire, Charles considered it his duty to spread the Christian faith employing whatever instruments necessary. *Encyclopedia Britannica* says, “The violent methods by which this missionary task was carried out had been unknown to the earlier Middle Ages, and the sanguinary [bloody] punishment meted out to those who broke canon law or continued to engage in pagan practices called forth criticism in Charles's own circle” (15th edition). The scale of violence Charlemagne used to enforce Catholicism on his subjects was simply *unknown* in earlier empires. His empire may have had distinct ties to the ancient Romans, but it was certainly not “holy,” even if there was a great church guiding it.

Is this the legacy to which modern Europe aspires?

## THE VATICAN'S ALLY

In 774, at the request of Pope Adrian I, Charlemagne entered northern Italy and conquered the Lombard Kingdom. In 799, Pope Leo III was kidnapped, brutally beaten and thrown into prison by a band of conspirators. After being rescued by two Frankish clerics, he fled to Charlemagne, who escorted him back to Rome. On December 23, 800, with the military backing of Charles and his Frankish troops, the pope was exonerated of all wrongdoing and reinstated to his ecclesiastic office.

Just a few days later, in Rome, while Charlemagne was kneeling in prayer during a Christmas celebration inside old St. Peter's Church, the pope placed a crown on his head, pronouncing him "the 73rd emperor of the fourth world empire."

Notice: This *Catholic* pope recognized Rome as the "fourth world empire." (We will discuss the biblical significance of this fact in Chapter 9.)

"After the Empress Irene had her son Constantine VI blinded in 797, both easterners and westerners regarded the imperial throne as vacant," states *The Mainstream of Civilization*. "Why not, they asked, resurrect the Roman Empire with Charles [Charlemagne] as emperor?" Charlemagne's empire was nothing new: It was a resurrection of what had gone before—just as the Bible prophesied.

But Charlemagne's coronation also contained the seeds of a dispute that would plague the Holy Roman Empire for centuries to come. Who was the ultimate authority? Was it the pope, "God's representative on Earth"? Or was it the king, the one with the armies? Charlemagne knew that the pope's seal of approval gave him his legitimacy. But he didn't want to owe his

crown to the pope alone. That made him subservient and dependent. The pope gained the upper hand early in this struggle by placing the crown on Charlemagne's head, asserting himself as the king's superior. But the king did not approve. When Charlemagne's son was made emperor, Charlemagne himself did the crowning.

The Bible describes this great false church as a whore—a prostitute (Revelation 17:1-5). She gives herself to others in exchange for benefits. Even the historians see this. Paul Johnson writes that the Roman church formed an “unseemly marriage between church and state.” He asks, “[D]id the empire surrender to Christianity, or did Christianity prostitute itself to the empire?” (*A History of Christianity*).

With the rise of Charlemagne, this harlot left the employ of the Byzantine Empire and instead served the Franks. She gave Pepin and Charlemagne legitimacy as kings, and supplied them an efficient system of administration. Without her backing, they couldn't have united Western Europe in a new Roman Empire. What did she get in return? Converts, for one. Political power for another. But the reign of Charlemagne also cemented Rome's position as head of the “Christian” world.

## CREATING A CATHOLIC CONTINENT

Prior to Charlemagne, in each of the various regions of Europe, the local Catholic Church celebrated Sunday services with its own local customs. When Charlemagne arrived, he made it policy to use the liturgy from Rome. Throughout his empire, the Sunday service was observed in the same way it was at Rome. Now that Western Europe was united under one empire, the emperor could ensure that “Christianity” was practiced uniformly.





Under the pope's direction, Charlemagne streamlined the observance of Catholicism throughout Europe, ensuring it was looking to Rome. He also relied on the church to regulate the lives of his subjects. "Bishops, abbots, priests and monks were the king's chief agents," wrote Johnson. "Royal officials were selected from among the higher clergy, and Charlemagne and his successors expanded and developed the use of church councils as legislative and executive organs. ... Through the church, the Carolingian age legislated in enormous detail on every aspect of conduct, especially on economic, family and sexual relationships" (ibid).

Despite Charlemagne's wars and violence, his reign was not one of brutality and barbarism alone. Historians speak of the "Carolingian Renaissance"—a revival of arts and learning that took place under Charlemagne. "His thirst for knowledge was tremendous; he was curious to know and understand everything," wrote Robert Folz in *The Coronation of Charlemagne*. "His political genius likewise enabled him to see the need for promoting culture if his kingdom was to acquire the splendor and prestige of the ancient world."

The culture, politics and educational systems endorsed and promoted by Charlemagne, however, were *distinctly Catholic creations*.

The emperor exhorted the Catholic clergy to become better educated. He then instructed them to teach the general population and raise up schools throughout the empire. He encouraged and patronized liberal arts education, bringing in Catholic teachers from Italy, Ireland and England.

"His aim," Johnson explained, "especially in the last decades of his life, was enormously to expand the literate



### 'RIGHTEOUS' KING

Crowned by the pope, Charlemagne waded through human blood to "convert" victims to Catholicism.

FREDERICH AUGUST KAULBACH

manpower of empire, to create a clergy capable not only of evangelizing the new Christians he had brought under his rule, but of deepening the knowledge of Christianity everywhere" (op cit).

To many, the image of an enlightened ruler promoting culture and education for all seems incompatible with a violent warrior converting thousands by the sword. But Charlemagne's example teaches us an important lesson: Culture and peace do not always go together. Modern Europe may appear to be a cultured and sophisticated group of nations. But as history reveals, that does not mean it is immune to Charlemagne's style of violence.

In fact, part of the reason Charlemagne worked so hard on education was because of his conquests. He needed trained clergymen to teach his new subjects the Catholic religion. All the new churches needed new books, which required more experts.

Charlemagne also reformed Europe's currency, minting standardized silver coins all over his empire.



### EMPEROR CHARLEMAGNE

A coin struck to honor the exemplar  
of the European church-state combine

His coins helped spur trade, but most importantly, they gave Europe a sense of unity. “[H]is portrait coinage,” writes historian Joanna Story, “sent an impressive and influential message of imperial status and power throughout the Frankish world—and beyond” (*Charlemagne: Empire and Society*). Indeed it did: Charlemagne’s coins replaced crude locally made coins that bore the name of a local ruler. They were deliberately modeled after Roman coinage, bearing a portrait of the emperor for the first time since the fall of Rome.

Much like the euro today, Charlemagne’s common currency was a tool for uniting the Continent.

### ‘THE SPIRIT OF CHARLEMAGNE’

In December 1978, then French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt held a summit in Aachen, the main seat of

Charlemagne's authority, to hash out the details of the European Monetary System, the precursor to the euro. "The symbolism was heavily underlined in both France and Germany," writes Bernard Connolly in *The Rotten Heart of Europe*. "The two leaders paid a special visit to the throne of Charlemagne and a special service was held in the cathedral; at the end of the summit, Giscard remarked that: 'Perhaps when we discussed monetary problems, the spirit of Charlemagne brooded over us.'"

This is the spirit European leaders wish to recapture: one that used currency to unify and control a squabbling bunch of nations while it increased its power abroad by torturing people to conversion.

Even Catholic historians recognize the centrality of Catholicism to Charlemagne's legacy. The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, for example, says the heritage Charlemagne left was essentially "the idea of a Europe welded together out of various races under the spiritual influence of one Catholic faith and one vicar of Christ ...."

Paul Johnson summarizes Charlemagne's empire this way: "It laid the foundations for the complementary concepts of Christendom and Europe. It projected, in broad outline, the directions which European institutions and culture would take. And it determined in embryo many of the aspects of the world we live in now. *We are right to regard the total Christianity of the Carolingian age as one of the great formative phases of human history*" (op cit).

It remains a mystery to most people today, but when political and religious leaders talk about reviving the spirit of Charlemagne, this is what they are talking about: a single empire united under one leader and one church. The question is, how far are Europe's leaders willing to go to resurrect the legacy of Charlemagne?

four

---

# OTTO THE GREAT—THE BIRTH OF GERMAN NATIONALISM

“When the German kings acquired the right to be crowned Roman emperors, the German people themselves became the imperial nation.

They accordingly began to take pride in the German name. A national sentiment was thus aroused, which the Germans never afterwards abandoned.”

—ISRAEL SMITH CLARE

**C**HARLEMAGNE DIED IN HIS CASTLE IN AACHEN THE morning of January 28, 814. He was an ardent Catholic till his last breath. His last act before he died was taking communion.

Before he died, Charles handed the keys of the Frankish empire to his son Louis the Pious. But Louis lacked the personality and leadership to fill the massive vacuum created by the death of his seemingly omnipotent father. It wasn't long before civil war broke out, and within a few years, Charlemagne's Frankish empire, one of the largest to ever rule Europe, had collapsed.

The empire was dead, but Charlemagne's dream of a Catholic-led, resurrected Holy Roman Empire was not. By the middle of the 10th century, it was once again becoming reality—this time on the east side of the Rhine River, in the forests of Germany.

In the early 10th century, the Germanic King Henry I, also known as Henry the Fowler, repelled many of the invaders plaguing Germany and established his royal influence over most of the dukes and aristocrats that ruled the Germanic tribes. By the time King Henry died and his son inherited his throne, the peoples of Germany had a strong central government. In 936, Henry's son Otto was crowned king of Germany.

Like Charlemagne, Otto was crowned in Aachen. And like Charlemagne, elements of Otto's coronation were copied from the Old Testament. His crown and clothing were modeled on the garments worn by ancient Israel's high priest (it also contained images of Israel's kings and of Christ). The symbols of the ceremony show that Otto saw himself as a high king-priest.

As soon as he became king, Otto picked up where his father left off. Like Charlemagne before him, Otto the

Great employed the *sword* and the *cross* to resurrect the ancient Roman Empire—this time creating a distinctly *German* Holy Roman Empire!

## THE OTTONIAN SYSTEM

Otto the Great wasted no time in forging a close relationship with the Vatican and making the Catholic Church the key sponsor of his dream of an empire. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says that when Otto inherited the throne of his father, the “Ottonian system, *a close alliance of the German realm with the church*, was begun” (emphasis added throughout). As the *Catholic Encyclopedia* acknowledges, “Charlemagne, too, had carried out the great conception of unity of church and state.”

The Ottonian system, wrote Friedrich Heer in his book *The Holy Roman Empire*, “transferred to [Catholic] bishops a preponderant weight and major responsibility, *thus making the imperial church the cornerstone of the empire*.” The pope became Otto’s chief advocate. And Otto, thanks to his relationship with the Vatican, was given the moral and spiritual license to do whatever was necessary to create a Germanic *Catholic* empire.

Of course, endorsing Europe’s most powerful leader came with terrific benefits for the Vatican. Like Charlemagne, Otto assumed the responsibility of defending the Catholic Church. In 960, when Pope John XII came under attack by Berengar of Ivrea, a descendant of the Lombards, Otto rode to his rescue. In 962, Pope John XII made Otto “holy Roman emperor,” and the new emperor went on to defeat Berengar. For the next 800 years, German kings called themselves “Roman emperors of the German nation.”

Like Charlemagne's alliance with the Vatican, the Catholic-German alliance was also a *military* alliance. "By granting the church such royal domains as were not in use, the state could devote its revenues to military purposes," reads the *Catholic Encyclopedia*.

Otto was a ruthless warrior. He used the sword to forcefully spread the reach of the Catholic Church. *Encyclopedia Britannica* says he was "subject to violent bursts of passion" and that "[h]is policy was to crush all tendencies to independence" (11th edition). Under Otto, like Charlemagne, "[c]onversion was by the sword," wrote Heer.

Otto quickly expanded the borders of the German Empire. He conquered northern Italy and became the most powerful ruler in Europe. In each new territory he conquered, Otto carefully planted new German colonies. Of course, these were also Catholic colonies, meaning that as the German Empire expanded, so did the reach and influence of the church.

Otto used the church as an agent to administer the regions he conquered. Besides increasing the support he received from churchmen, this arrangement helped secure Otto's leadership. Bishops were supposed to be celibate, which meant they would never rebel in order to set up their own dynasty.

## THE RISE OF GERMAN NATIONALISM

The rule of Otto marked the dawn of German nationalism. Prior to this time, the Germans were still largely divided according to tribe. "But when the German kings acquired the right to be crowned Roman emperors, the German people *themselves became the imperial nation*. They accordingly began to take pride in the German name.

A national sentiment was thus aroused, which the Germans never afterwards abandoned” (Israel Smith Clare, *The World’s History Illuminated*, Vol. 4).

German nationalism is rooted in the work of Otto the Great—an ardent Catholic and a man cut from the same cloth as Charlemagne. The world-ruling, nationalistic spirit that he engendered is what drove so many German kings across the Alps into Italy in search of things Roman. Although relations between German emperors and Catholic popes have not been without competition and struggle for supremacy, it is clear why the affair has endured the test of time. German emperors have always known that the road to world dominion goes through Rome.

Equally so, the papacy has long known that the only way to forcefully spread its religion is to straddle the terrifying political beast wielding the sword.

## THE INVESTITURE CONTROVERSY

Otto’s empire—the third revival of the Holy Roman Empire—proved to be more enduring than Charlemagne’s. He passed rulership on to his sons and their descendants, who preserved the vital Catholic connection to the empire. The length to which many German kings went to secure close ties with the papacy is remarkable. In fact, Otto’s next two successors, his son and grandson, spent most of their lives, and eventually died, in the neighborhood of Rome.

During this time, however, tension emerged between the German kings and the Vatican. Church officials grew tired of the kings’ influence in ecclesiastical affairs, and by the reign of Henry IV in 1056 the church was ready to stand up to the kings and assert its spiritual influence

over the state. In 1075, Pope Gregory VII began issuing commands to Henry, a move that quickly annoyed the king and resulted in a showdown between the two most powerful men in Europe.

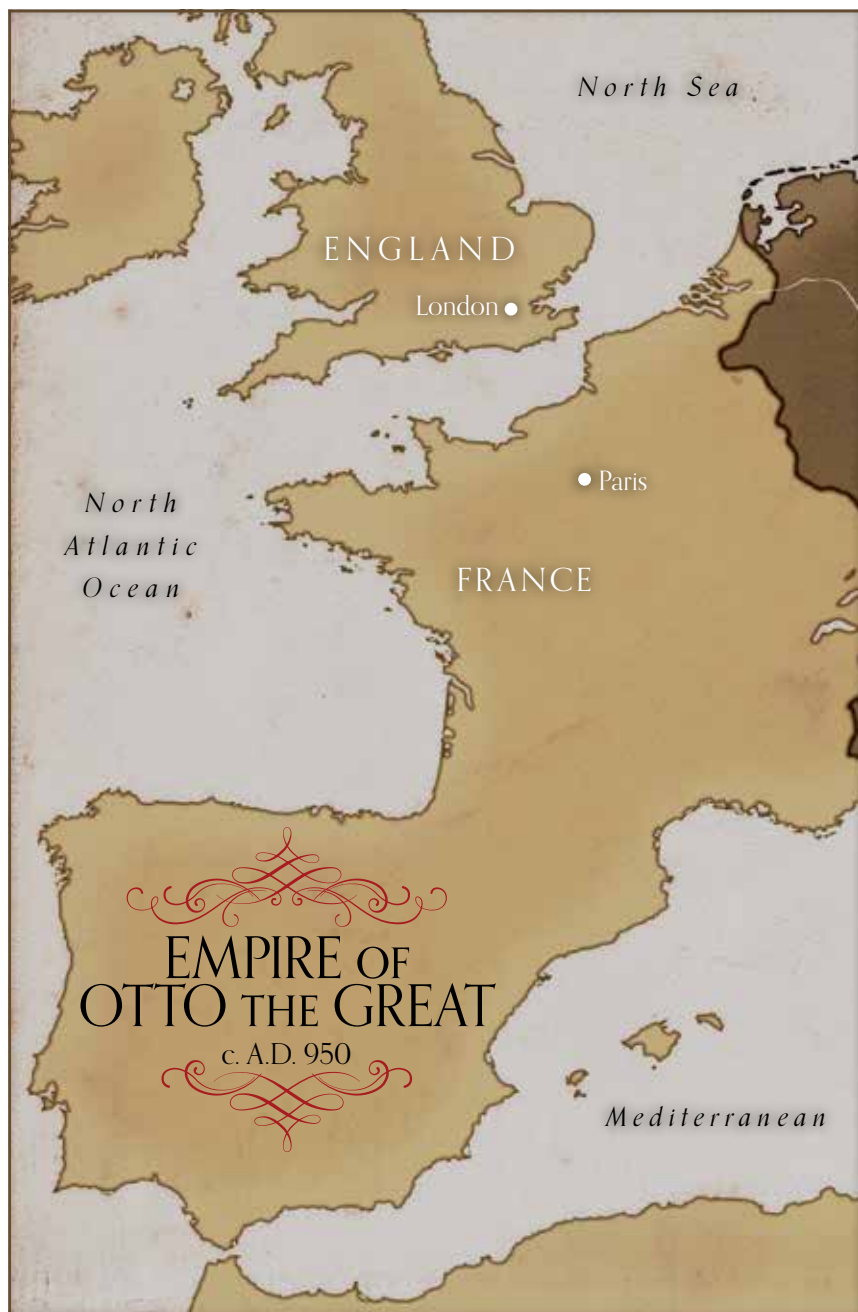
This confrontation is known today as the Investiture Controversy. It was essentially a battle over who had the right to choose church leaders. But the root cause of the fight was the Catholic Church's thirst for power. "There can be little doubt that Gregory VII was the aggressor, in that Henry IV was merely doing what all his predecessors had done," writes Paul Johnson in *A History of Christianity*.

Since the time of Otto, the king had appointed the church's bishops. Now the popes refused to allow this, saying that only church authorities could appoint them. But the scope of the confrontation went far beyond appointing bishops. The bishops held so much secular power that handing over sole control of the bishops to Rome meant handing over large swathes of the empire. What the pope wanted "amounted to a theory of papal world-government," writes Johnson.

The Catholic Church, according to Pope Gregory VII, "has never erred; nor will it err." The pope proclaimed that *he alone* had the authority not only to appoint and work with the bishops, but also to "make new laws ... depose emperors and absolve subjects from their allegiance," Johnson explains.

This is a perfect real-world embodiment of the woman riding the beast described in Revelation 17!

Such a papal power grab was unacceptable to the German kings. In January 1076, Henry gathered the bishops from northern Italy and Germany. They all agreed not to obey the pope, and actually called on Gregory to





abdicate. Pope Gregory excommunicated the emperor and all the bishops who allied with him. The pope claimed he had power to make and unmake emperors, and so Henry was no longer the king of the Germans.

The real holder of power quickly became clear. Henry's nobles seized on this papal pronouncement as an opportunity to rebel against their king. Within a year, a penitent Henry waited in the snow outside the pope's residence in bare feet, begging forgiveness. In the imagery of biblical prophecy, the beast was groveling before the woman, seeking forgiveness and restitution.

But with so much at stake, the confrontation did not end quickly. The pope deposed and excommunicated Henry again in 1080. The emperor won this round of the battle; Pope Gregory was driven from Rome and died in exile. Gregory's successors remained adamant in their opposition to the political ruler. The confrontation was vicious, and on several occasions the Catholic Church even attempted to assassinate Germany's monarchs. "Unspeakable ferocity was throughout the hallmark of these death-struggles between popes and emperors," writes Johnson.

Finally in 1122, at Worms, Pope Calixtus II and Emperor Henry V came to an agreement. The church won the authority to elect its own bishops, but it agreed to do so in the presence of the emperor. It was a victory for the pope. The church could guide the beast—as long as it didn't force the empire too far out of its way. The rivalry between pope and emperor, however, continued for the rest of this resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire, weakening it and hastening its downfall.

The Vatican never forgot the German kings who had defied it. Hundreds of years later, in the 13th century, the

church had the descendants of these kings imprisoned or executed.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Revelation 17 prophecy is that, in addition to forecasting the unity between the woman and the beast, it says that there would also be tension and confrontation. Speaking of the final resurrection of this Holy Roman Empire, Revelation 17:16 states, “And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore [the Catholic Church], and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” This scripture states there will be another falling-out between church and state in this end time.

In Henry’s time, church-state cooperation did not end for good. With the fall of the Ottonian Empire, the stage was set for another German family to gain favor with the Vatican in its quest for world rule. This royal line would eventually span 600 years of history!

## THE CATHOLIC CRUSADES

---

THE CRUSADES WERE A SERIES OF ROMAN CATHOLIC “holy” wars that occurred between the late-11th century and the 15th century. The purpose of these wars was to wrest control of the Holy Land from the Muslims. They produced some of the bloodiest battles in history.

In A.D. 614, Catholics fought and were defeated in a war against the Persians and the Jews. “Christians” claim some 60,000 Catholics were killed and 35,000 enslaved. The fall of Jerusalem left the Catholic world shocked and mourning—and bitter against the Jews for the role they had played in the war. Some historians consider this the First Crusade. But the Crusades we best remember came later, beginning in the 11th century.

These Crusades began on November 27, 1095, at the Council of Clermont. Here in southern France, Pope Urban II delivered a rousing speech to thousands of followers. He told Catholic Europeans that it was their

“Christian” duty to recapture Jerusalem, butcher the “heathens” who had infiltrated it, and reestablish Vatican control over the spiritual and physical “center” of the universe. The pope’s speech unleashed a savage Catholic army—one so devoted to its cause that it marched 3,000 miles to conquer the Holy Land.

In *Crusades*, Terry Jones and Alan Ereira write: “By summoning an army under the banner of the cross, *the pope was extending the church’s mantle over all Christendom*. This was the idea at the very heart of the revolutionary papacy; in place of separate local churches at the center of discreet communities, there was to be one overarching church, ruled by one overarching pope. *The Crusade was to be its expression and its instrument. ...*

“Urban’s army would also rescue Jerusalem, the spiritual (and therefore the physical) center of the universe. He hoped that the redeemed Jerusalem would be directly ruled by the church.”

The Crusades reveal the Catholic Church’s profound desire to control Jerusalem. But that aim is just part of its desire for world domination. The way to world government, it believed—and still believes—is through Jerusalem. Paul Johnson writes that the church held “the idea that Europe was a Christian entity, *which had acquired certain inherent rights over the rest of the world by virtue of its faith, and its duty to spread it*” (*A History of Christianity*).

In Urban’s famous speech, unreliably recorded by William of Malmesbury, the pope declared: “Can anyone tolerate that we do not even share equality with the Muslims the inhabited Earth? They have made Asia, which is a third of the world, their homeland. ... They have forcibly helped Africa, the second portion of the world,

for over 200 years.” This arrangement was upside-down, the pope argued: “In one sense the whole world is exile for a Christian, and in another *the whole world is his country*.”

Jones and Ereira conclude, “By saying that carrying out a military/political enterprise would make you a better person, wiping out past sins, Urban had invented a way by which every person could internalize papal policy. *Fighting in the pope’s cause was not only an obligation, it made you righteous*. With that one idea, mass political action was launched. With that one idea, ideology was born. With that one idea, the Crusade was set in motion. Urban did not understand what he had done” (op cit).

Pope Urban initiated a series of indescribably brutal wars between Catholics and Muslims. The Crusades spilled rivers of blood, all in the name of God. Of course, Muslims responded with massive slaughters against the crusaders, also in the name of God.

Jones and Ereira recalled an incident after the Catholic army had taken Jerusalem. “The following morning the Crusaders reentered the al-Aqsa Mosque and slaughtered every Muslim sheltering there. No one knows how many died; the Muslim chronicler reports 70,000. One of the crusaders reports picking his way through a mess of blood and bodies more than knee-deep” (ibid). This was only one gruesome episode of many.

The Catholic Church endorsed the slaughter of tens of thousands. “But killing, the pope now declared, need not be a sin after all. It depended on who you killed. In fact, if you killed the enemies of Christ, killing did not require penance—it *was* the penance. Holy slaughter could be as effective a devotional activity as prayer, or fasting, or pilgrimage ...” (ibid). Killing heathens put one on the path to salvation!

Muslim and Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem were mercilessly slaughtered. All of this was done by Catholics who sincerely believed—and had been told by the pope—that they were becoming more righteous in the process. The memory of such horrendous massacres still lives in the minds of many Arabs. Those memories have provoked Arabs and Jews to massacre Catholics throughout history in a similar manner—all in the name of religion.

The Crusade philosophy has made Catholic popes the bloodiest religious leaders ever.

Still, most people ignore this sobering reality. Most history books, when they recite this history, speak of the Crusades as the “Christian” crusades. This is watering down the truth. The fact is, it was the *Catholic Church* that spearheaded this bloody series of wars! The Catholics unleashed their violence even against Orthodox Christians at times.

This is the main reason why the worst Catholic crusade is yet to come: Because mankind refuses to study history, accept the truth, and believe God!

## CAUSING MANY TO BE PUT TO DEATH

---

**T**HE CATHOLIC CHURCH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE death of millions during the Middle Ages. The Crusades massacred whole cities in the Middle East. But the church killed thousands in Europe too. Society was Catholic. To reject Catholicism was to reject society. Jews had no rights. Those who converted away from Catholicism were put to death.

How were the “heretics” killed? Revelation 13:15 says this religious beast would “*cause* that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” It wouldn’t kill them itself—it would “*cause*” them to be killed. This is exactly what the church did.

If an un-Catholic belief took root in an area where there was a weak government, the church called on an outside power to intervene. For example, in 1208 the church called for the Albigensian Crusades in the south of France. Knights who fought were given a free pass through purgatory from the pope. The crusaders didn’t bother trying to sort the Catholics from the “heretics.” The pope told them, “Kill them all. God will know His own.” Whole cities were massacred. One soldier boasted

to the pope that they had killed 15,000 in taking one city, “showing mercy neither to order, nor age nor sex.” The Crusades were a license for soldiers to rape, pillage and burn, while the pope told them they were doing God’s work.

The church also condemned individual “heretics” to death. Their method was subtle. The Bible says this church looks like a lamb and speaks like a dragon (verse 11). If the church accused someone of heresy, it wouldn’t kill the man. Instead it labeled him as being “deprived of the protection of the church.” It even sent a formal plea for mercy for the heretic. The church looked like a lamb—but this was only an illusion. The local official knew that if he didn’t have the man put to death, he himself would be condemned as a defender of heretics and killed.

In rooting out these heretics and punishing “thought crimes,” the church violated “town charters, written and customary laws, and virtually every aspect of established jurisprudence,” Paul Johnson explains. “The object, quite simply, was to produce convictions at any cost” (*A History of Christianity*).

five

---

# THE HABSBURG DYNASTY—A GLOBAL EMPIRE

“From the birth of popery ... it is estimated by careful and credible historians that more than 50 millions of the human family have been slaughtered for the crime of heresy by popish persecutors ....”

—JOHN DOWLING

**A**FTER OTTO THE GREAT DIED IN 973, HIS GERMAN Empire—which he patterned after Charlemagne’s and built with the moral and spiritual support of the Catholic Church—continued as Europe’s most formidable empire. After several generations, however, it decayed into a severely weakened and fragmented state.

During the 13th century, Europe entered the valley between the third and fourth resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire.

The demise of Otto’s Germanic kingdom created a power vacuum in Europe. Before long, some of Europe’s other royal houses began positioning themselves to replace the Ottonians as the power brokers of the Continent. Following the path that Charlemagne and Otto had taken before them, the first step they took in seeking to dominate Europe was to secure the support of Europe’s ultimate spiritual authority.

The seeds of the fourth resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire were sown in the 13th century, when the Habsburg family stepped up its cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church.

## THE HABSBURGS

The Habsburg dynasty is ancient—so old that its origins are somewhat of a mystery. Early on, the Habsburgs seemed more concerned about the legacy of their own dynasty in Germany and Austria than about world dominion. But after the decline of the German Reich founded by Otto the Great, they began cooperating more with the Vatican, with the intention of resurrecting, yet again, the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1273, Austria’s King Rudolf of Habsburg was crowned king of the Romans by Pope Gregory x in

Aachen, the seat of Charlemagne's authority. In order to receive this recognition from the church, Rudolf had to renounce his imperial rights and his claims to territory in Italy, and to issue a promise to wage a crusade. Quid pro quo, the pope persuaded Alfonso x of Castile, a rival for the imperial throne, to recognize Rudolf. Thus, the relationship between the Habsburgs and the pope began.

Although Rudolf had been declared king of the Romans, the official title of emperor of the Holy Roman Empire was not bestowed on the Habsburg rulers for another couple of generations. In 1452, Frederick IV, king of Austria, was crowned Frederick III, the "holy Roman emperor." That title remained in the family until the dynasty officially ended in 1806.

The greatness of the Habsburg dynasty lies more in its duration than in its dynamic leaders. Yet it did produce at least two outstanding kings who reigned successively in the 16th century: Maximilian I (1493–1519) and Charles V (1519–1556). Both these kings drastically expanded the power and influence of the Habsburgs and, of course, the Roman Catholic Church.

## MAXIMILIAN I

Maximilian laid the groundwork for an international empire encompassing most of Europe and Latin America. He did this by arranging two marriages with the Spanish houses of Castile and Aragon. In one marriage, Maximilian's son Philip married Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. This union united Spain and its colonial possessions in the Americas with the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation.

Like many before him, Maximilian frequently allied with and fought for the pope. When Charles VIII of France

invaded Italy, Maximilian joined an alliance to drive him out. At one point he demonstrated his allegiance by turning down an offer to be made pope himself.

*Encyclopedia Britannica* concludes, “Great as Maximilian’s achievements were, they did not match his ambitions; he had hoped to unite all of Western Europe by reviving the empire of Charlemagne.” Though he personally failed at that task, it would continue to be pursued by his descendants.

## CHARLES V

In 1520, Charles, the son of Philip and Joanna, was crowned as Roman Emperor Charles v. Philip died before Maximilian, so Charles ended up succeeding his grandfather. Like Charlemagne and Otto, Charles was crowned in Aachen.

Before his coronation, Charles was asked the traditional questions by the archbishop of Cologne: “Wilt thou hold and guard by all proper means the sacred faith as handed down to Catholic men? Wilt thou be the faithful shield and protector of the holy church and her servants? Wilt thou uphold and recover those rights of the realm and possessions of the empire which have been unlawfully usurped? ... Wilt thou pay due SUBMISSION to the Roman pontiff and the Holy Roman Church?” (emphasis added throughout).

To these questions, Charles responded, “I will.”

After his coronation, he conducted himself in accordance with the conviction that the emperor reigned supreme. He went on to become one of the greatest emperors in history.

At age 19, Charles became ruler over Spanish and German dominions, including Germany, Burgundy, Italy





and Spain, along with sizable overseas possessions. His kingdom became known as “the empire on which the sun never sets.”

Ten years later, in 1530, Charles was officially crowned emperor in Rome by Pope Clement VII, after Charles’s armies defeated the pope’s in 1527. In his youth, Charles was taught by Adrian of Utrecht, who went on to become Pope Adrian VI.

During Charles’s reign, vast territories in Latin America were converted to Catholicism. This began before Charles ascended to the Spanish throne. Spanish and Portuguese explorers, encouraged by the Vatican, claimed new territory for their home nations. In 1493, Pope Alexander VI gave much of the new land to Spain and, in exchange, asked Spain to convert the natives to Catholicism. *Encyclopedia Britannica* records that Spanish and Portuguese rulers “recognized the obligation to convert the indigenous population as part of their royal duty.” Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians and Jesuits traveled with the European ships. Much of the conversion of the natives took place under the reign of Charles V and his son Philip II.

The Catholic Church quickly became the most powerful institution in Latin America. Priests were held in such great respect that they could be relied on to control the masses if the army failed. The Jesuits even had their own private armies. When the Spanish government tried to reform the Catholic Church hundreds of years later, the priests turned the population against Spain. They led Latin America to independence. The fact that this vast territory became Catholic still affects geopolitics today.

During the reign of Charles V, the fourth resurrection

of the Holy Roman Empire reached its apex. Not since the days of Charlemagne had a holy Roman emperor ruled over such an immense territory.

## THE VATICAN'S INSTRUMENT

Charles v reached the height of power while the Spanish and Roman inquisitions were raging in Europe. Although the Spanish Inquisition was started by his grandparents, Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles took it to new levels. He became a deadly weapon of the Catholic Church.

At first, the Inquisition forced the conversion of Jews and Muslims. All Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492. Then the majority of Moriscos—converted Muslims living in Spain who had retained some Islamic practices—were killed.

Charles v became king of Spain in 1516 (known as Charles I). The following year, Martin Luther produced his 95 Theses, and the Protestant Reformation began. The Spanish Inquisition was aggressively expanded into Europe and brought to full fury during the Protestant Reformation. The Inquisition proved to be an effective Counter-Reformation weapon.

Many thousands across Europe were made to convert to Catholicism or were tortured and executed by the church at this time. In his 1871 book, *The History of Romanism*, author John Dowling wrote, “From the birth of popery ... it is estimated by careful and credible historians that more than 50 millions of the human family have been slaughtered for the crime of heresy by popish persecutors ....” *Halley's Bible Handbook* corroborates this figure: “Historians estimate that, in the Middle Ages and Early Reformation era, *more than 50 million martyrs perished.*”

That is more than twice the population of Australia—tortured and killed for not converting to Catholicism.

Charles fought forcefully against Protestantism. In 1545, he presided over the Council of Trent, which initiated the Catholic Counter-Reformation. This reformation was the Vatican's response to the Protestant Reformation. This response was brutal, using torture and imprisonment to bring wayward Catholics back into the fold. Germany's Protestant princes formed the Schmalkaldic League, which Charles defeated in 1547.

However, Charles was too distracted by other wars to prevent Protestantism from getting a powerful hold over Germany, though he fought hard to stop its spread. By 1547, Lutherism had grown so strong within Germany that he was forced to recognize it.

Charles v abdicated in 1556. After his reign, the Habsburg dynasty severed along Spanish and Austrian lines. The Austrian Habsburg line still assumed the title "Roman emperors of the German nation" like their predecessors five centuries before, except they no longer pilgrimaged to Rome to be crowned by the pope. The imperial office became hereditary within the Habsburg line.

By the early 17th century, the power and might of the Habsburg empire—the fourth resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire—had begun to wane. The Protestant Reformation had considerably weakened the once-dominant church in Rome. On the secular side, the tide of power was beginning to shift toward France.

The fourth revival of the "Holy" Roman Empire was on its last leg, but the inevitable fifth revival of the Holy Roman Empire was on its way!

## SELLING SPIRITUAL FAVORS

---

THE ORIGINS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH CAN be traced back to when the Apostle Peter spurned Simon Magus for attempting to buy the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18-21). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the religion that Simon Magus founded eventually became extremely rich by *selling spiritual favors*.

The most famous of these was the selling of *indulgences*, a practice especially popular during the Middle Ages.

The church taught that men could reduce the time they would have to spend suffering in purgatory by giving money to the church. The sale of indulgences operated like a franchise, like Subway or McDonald's: A local bishop would buy the right to sell indulgences from the papacy. This gave him permission to use the Catholic "brand," and he then worked to profit from this purchase by selling indulgences to those in his district.

The Middle Ages version of the practice began with the Crusades. In 1095, Pope Urban II decreed that all those

who went on a crusade would have their sins forgiven, and their time in purgatory would be wiped out. At the start of the 13th century, this practice was expanded so that those who helped with money and advice were also eligible to have their sins forgiven. From then on, the church seized on indulgences as a means of gathering wealth and power. By the end of the century, it had become a political tool, given to princes to win their favor.

Indulgences were a potent method for raising money. The church profited greatly from people's sins. Those on their deathbed could buy indulgences and go straight to heaven. Indulgences could be purchased by contributing money toward a cathedral. "Thus a period of pillage and lawlessness might also be characterized by a luxuriant crop of new monasteries, like the England of Stephen's reign," Paul Johnson writes in *A History of Christianity*. *Encyclopedia Britannica* notes, "From the 12th century onward the process of salvation was therefore increasingly bound up with money."

Eventually the practice became so widespread that it became financially painful, a major grievance among the people, and one of the catalysts of the Protestant Reformation. Thus the church lost its spiritual monopoly, and with it the power to demand that its followers hand over money or suffer for untold years in purgatory. Responding to the Reformation, Pope Pius v canceled all indulgences that involved financial transactions in 1567.

However, indulgences were not the church's only revenue raisers. One of the most hated was the death duty. When someone died, tradition dictated that an item of value be handed over to the local priest. The price varied. In some places, it was the person's bed; for others it was his best garment; in still others it was his

second-best possession (the local lord sometimes took the best). For some districts, the church's price was as high as one third of all the man's possessions.

This death duty was often collected no matter how poor the parishioner. And the church had a powerful tool to enforce their collection: In many cases, the church would not bury a man unless the duty was paid.

Imagine the position this would put a grieving mother or widow in. The main provider of the household may have just died, and the family would be told that unless they made significant gifts to the church, their husband and father would not be buried. He would be deprived the prayers and blessing of the church and would therefore have to suffer longer in purgatory or perhaps even burn forever in hell. The new widow would be forced to choose between risking the survival of her family or the soul of her husband.

If the family refused to pay, the church would often help itself to what it felt it was due.

For a time, the Catholic Church was the most successful protection racket in history. "During the Avignon regime, the central machinery of the church turned itself primarily into a money-raising organization," Johnson writes. "In England, the clergy, with 1 percent of the population, disposed of about 25 percent of the gross national product. This was about average. In some parts of France and Germany the church was wealthier and owned one third to half of all real estate."

The Catholic Church is one of the wealthiest institutions on Earth. Millions of people marvel at its magnificent possessions and awesome material splendor. But how many realize how it came by its wealth?

six

---

# NAPOLEON— SON OF ROME

“I am the successor,  
not of Louis xvi,  
but of Charlemagne.”

—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

**M**OST HISTORY BOOKS TEACH THAT THE HOLY Roman Empire began with Charlemagne and ended with the Habsburgs sometime during the 16th century. It is generally believed that the Protestant Reformation ended the church-state relationship. The French Revolution of the late 18th century, during which the Catholic Church was violently removed from France, is also considered a nail in its coffin.

There is no doubt that both these events curtailed the church's reach, at least temporarily. But it is incorrect to think that the Holy Roman Empire, the cyclical reincarnation of the church-state alliance, ended in the 18th century.

At the turn of the 19th century, in the wake of the French Revolution, another empire allied itself with the Vatican and embraced Charlemagne's dream of a resurrected Roman Empire. This resurrection, the fifth from Justinian, came not from Austria or Germany, but from France.

The emperor of the fifth manifestation of the Holy Roman Empire, *a man endorsed by the Vatican* and who adored the heritage of Rome, was Napoleon Bonaparte.

## **'I AM A ROMAN EMPEROR'**

"Naturally, when one thinks of Napoleon's historical references, *the first that comes to mind is Rome*," wrote Thierry Lentz, director of the Foundation Napoléon. "It is true that the emperor of the French relied a great deal on the prevailing Roman fashion" (Napoleon.org; emphasis added throughout).

In 1810, Napoleon himself said, "I am a Roman emperor. I come from the best line of Caesars—the Caesars who build."

Although Napoleon appeared more than 1,300 years after Rome's collapse, his supreme ambition was to resurrect the Roman Empire. This, as we will see in Chapter 9, is precisely what the Prophet Daniel and the Apostle John prophesied—that each resurrection would be a revival of the *Roman Empire*.

You can probably guess the historical figure Napoleon most admired, and even patterned his strategy of creating a European empire after. “[I]n a society where *history was the foundation of all thought and even action*, the empire could not be devoid of historical roots,” wrote Lentz. “These roots were then created, most notably making use of *Charlemagne*” (ibid).

Like Charles v and Otto the Great before him, Napoleon considered Charlemagne the ultimate embodiment of the revived Roman Empire. He knew that the best way to revive the Roman Empire was to follow Charlemagne's example. In fact, the similarities between Charlemagne and Napoleon are striking. Both men pursued their ambition with the sword. Both were ruthless. Both valued and promoted culture and education. And, as was the case with every manifestation of the Holy Roman Empire, Napoleon relied on the Catholic Church to provide the moral and spiritual legitimacy required to fulfill his vain ambitions.

Napoleon used the spread eagle, the symbol of both Rome and Charlemagne, as his standard. One of his first acts after becoming emperor was to make a pilgrimage to Aachen, Charlemagne's home and burial place. While there, he received a delegation of Rhine princes, who hailed Napoleon as the “first of our Roman Caesars to have crossed the Rhine to drive out the barbarians.”



## EMPEROR NAPOLEON

The French conqueror crowns himself in the pope's presence.

JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID

Charlemagne, more than any other historical figure, was omnipresent during Napoleon's reign!

Like Charlemagne, Napoleon knew he needed the sanction of the Catholic Church. And the church was eager to employ him. When Napoleon became emperor on December 2, 1804, his new crown was called the Crown of Charlemagne.

Statues and pictures of Charlemagne were present everywhere throughout the ceremony. A small statue of Charlemagne even stood on the scepter. The hand of justice and sword used in the ceremony were also said to be of Charlemagne. After he was crowned, Napoleon stated, "I have succeeded, not to the throne of Louis XVI, but to that of Charlemagne."

Six months after this coronation, Napoleon was crowned king of Italy in Milan, just as Charlemagne had been named king of the Lombards. The president of the electoral college of Tortona told him, "You have regenerated the empire of the Franks and this throne of Charlemagne's, which has been buried under 10 centuries of ruins."

Library shelves overflow with volumes exploring the character, leadership and accomplishments of Napoleon Bonaparte. Business leaders, politicians and military students study his life and work to glean lessons and further their careers. Bonaparte is one of the most studied historical figures of our time. But the most significant truth about Napoleon is by far the least appreciated: that Napoleonic France was the fifth resurrection of the prophesied Holy Roman Empire.

## NAPOLÉON'S CATHOLIC WEAPON

Like the “holy” Roman emperors before him, Napoleon used the Catholic Church as a vehicle to pursue his grandiose ambition of resurrecting the glories of Rome. “Napoleon did not intend to serve religion, *but to use it*,” writes John Vidmar in *The Catholic Church Through the Ages: A History*.

Under Napoleon, the church became an important instrument of the government. Napoleon would nominate bishops, the pope would approve them, and the bishops would appoint parish priests. All clergy were paid a salary by the state and the practice of worship was under state control. Many have forgotten, but this was, in many ways, a robust church-state relationship.

During the French Revolution, the Catholic Church was largely expelled from public life. Religious symbols were seized, church bells taken down, and even some steeples leveled. The government tried to wipe out Sunday worship by decimalizing the week—holding a day of rest every 10 days.

Initially, Bonaparte continued the revolution's opposition to the church. His armies arrested cardinals and even took Pope Pius VI prisoner. But after Pius VI died

in prison, Napoleon came to the same conclusion that Justinian, Charlemagne, Otto and the Habsburgs had all come to before him: To have maximum power, he needed moral and spiritual cover provided by the Catholic Church.

Napoleon reintroduced the church to the French people. “The advantages to the French government are obvious,” Vidmar writes, but the “church benefited as well. Revolutionary cults would be abandoned, as well as ‘constitutional’ worship. The pope was recognized as having the right of canonical institution of bishops, and the clergy would be materially provided for. ... The church would maintain its right to own property, to form religious orders, and to regulate its own affairs.”

Paul Johnson also noted Napoleon’s positive impact on the Catholic Church. “Thus we have the paradox that the convulsion which threatened to engulf Roman Christianity ended by endowing a dying papacy with a new cycle of life,” he writes. “And the papacy, thus reborn, returned to an ancient theme but with a modern orchestration—populist triumphalism” (*A History of Christianity*).

After decades of fighting Protestantism, and having survived the waves of revolution that swept across Europe, the Catholic Church was suddenly back as an influential force in the world.

To make peace with the church, Napoleon signed the Concordat of 1801 with Pius VII. This agreement reversed a lot of the setbacks the revolution had inflicted upon the church. It proclaimed that Catholicism was the religion of the great majority of the French citizens. It guaranteed Catholics freedom of religion—but also brought that religion under some state control, stating that bishops had to swear loyalty to the government.



But Napoleon could not afford to upset the Protestants. The concordat did not make Catholicism the only allowed religion. It also allowed all those who had received land from the Catholic Church during the revolution to keep it.

Just as he was with Charlemagne, the pope was intimately involved in Napoleon's coronation. But Napoleon found it hard to take orders from anyone. He



choreographed his own coronation. Instead of making the long journey to Rome for the ceremony, Napoleon made the pope come to him. And when the moment arrived for him to be crowned emperor, Napoleon took the crown from the altar and placed it on his own head.

In his book *Napoleon*, Paul Johnson describes how significant the title of emperor was to Bonaparte's accomplishments. Becoming emperor, Johnson writes,

“became the foundation stone of a mounting edifice of satellite kingdoms, princedoms and duchies, of medals, honors and stars, of protocols and privileges that the new emperor created and bestowed at will, and frequently revoked, too.”

Napoleon may not have been an ardent Catholic like Charlemagne, but he knew history. He knew that to achieve his dream of a united European empire, he needed the sanction of the Roman Catholic Church. And the church, after suffering major setbacks during the Reformation and French Revolution, saw Napoleon as a means of restoring its place and power.

Of course, much like it was with previous emperors, Napoleon's relationship with the Catholic Church was fleeting. Napoleon later fell out with the church as the Vatican finally grew tired of his overbearing influence in its affairs. Napoleon was eventually excommunicated. He responded by having Pius VII taken prisoner. Despite the falling out, though, the pope stood by Napoleon once he was finally defeated and taken prisoner by the British, even writing to the British government asking for Napoleon to be treated better.

Late in his rule, Napoleon admitted regret at the heavy-handed approach he sometimes took toward the church, and for having not harnessed more of the Catholic power to use to his advantage. “I should have controlled the religious as well as the political world,” he wrote, “and summoned church councils like Constantine.”

## NAPOLÉON'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Like earlier resurrections of this empire, Napoleon's reign was dominated by almost perpetual conflict, destruction and death. In his book *Napoleon's Wars*,

Charles Esdaile identifies a number of causes of these wars—but, he writes, “the prime mover was Napoleon’s own aggression, egomania and lust for power ....”

“Napoleon Bonaparte was not just the ultimate warlord—a man who would have been nothing without war and conquest—but he was never capable of setting the same limits on himself as the rulers and statesmen who had waged the conflicts of the 18th century,” writes Esdaile.

It was “the emperor’s determination to eschew compromise, to flex his muscles on every possible occasion and to push matters to extremes” that forced the Napoleonic Wars, Esdaile writes. They were exceptionally bloody. The French invented the concept of universal conscription during their revolution, and for the first time Europe was engulfed in a war where nations on both sides conscripted soldiers. The result was catastrophic. Around 4 million died, an almost unfathomable figure for the world at that time.

In the War of the Spanish Succession—which occurred about 100 years earlier and unfolded over the same length of time as the Napoleonic Wars—around a dozen major battles were fought. During the Napoleonic Wars, there were at least 40. Soldiers were no longer a scarce resource that took a lot of time and money to train; their lives could be thrown away more cheaply.

But Napoleon’s reign did not last long, and he did not pass his power to a successor. It ended with his fall at Waterloo. Once again, the beast went underground.

seven

---

# WORLD WAR II AND HITLER'S POPE

“The Vatican was so appreciative of being recognized as a full partner that it asked God to bless [Hitler’s] reich.”

—JOHN WILLARD TOLAND

**W**HEN BENITO MUSSOLINI BECAME ITALY'S PRIME minister in 1922, he immediately began referring to his regime as the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1929, he signed a pact with the Vatican making Roman Catholicism the only state-recognized religion in Fascist Italy. This agreement, known as the Lateran Treaty, delighted Pope Pius XI, who spoke of Mussolini as "a man sent by Providence." The treaty also pleased Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, who in February 1930 became the Vatican's secretary of state and would later become Pope Pius XII.

The Lateran Treaty also caught the attention of another rising authoritarian in Europe: Adolf Hitler.

The Second World War, which began 10 years later, marked the apex of the sixth resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire. Today there is no shortage of facts and figures about World War II, and no lack of research and books by intelligent historians deciphering all this information. Bookstores and online stores overflow with books detailing the causes of the war, the scale of devastation, the attempted genocide of Europe's Jews, and many other aspects of this history.

Despite all the attention, there remains a common blind spot among many contemporary historians when it comes to World War II.

We've studied the critical contributions made by the Vatican and various Catholic figures to the endeavors of Charlemagne, Otto the Great and Napoleon. We've seen how the Vatican has participated in nearly all of Europe's bloodiest, most destructive conflicts. Consider this history in the context of the Second World War, and an inevitable question comes to mind.

Did the Vatican condone and support Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany during the war?

## HITLER AND THE VATICAN

Just days after Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty in February 1929, Adolf Hitler praised the agreement in an article in *Völkischer Beobachter*, the newspaper of the Nationalist Socialist German Workers' Party. Hitler held no political office at this time, but subsequent events reveal that he was already anticipating the day when he would become a sort of German Mussolini, with the power to negotiate his own concordat with the Vatican.

Like Charlemagne and the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire before him, Hitler knew he needed the support of the Vatican if he was to exercise full control over Germany—and eventually, Europe and the world.

Robert G. L. Waite, in his book *The Psychopathic God—Adolf Hitler*, recited a telling statement made by Hitler: “Above all, *I have learned from the Jesuit order*” (emphasis added throughout).

Hitler's personality and leadership were greatly influenced by Catholic Jesuits. “Certainly the oath of direct obedience to the führer was strikingly reminiscent of the special oath that Jesuits swear to the pope,” Waite wrote. “Moreover, Hitler spoke of his elite SS, who wore the sacred symbol and dressed in black, *as his Society of Jesus*. He also ordered SS officers to study the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola for training in the rigid discipline of the faith.”

Adolf Hitler learned a lot from the Vatican and the way it operates.

But Hitler didn't merely borrow a few practices from the Catholic Church. Like his Holy Roman Empire predecessors, he relied on the Vatican for moral and spiritual support and protection as he pursued his grim and lofty ambitions.

The history is incredible—and powerfully condemning.

During the 1920s both Pope Pius XI and Eugenio Pacelli devoted a lot of attention to Germany as it recovered from World War I. (Pacelli was an archbishop at the time and the Vatican's primary nuncio to Germany between 1917 and 1929. He was stationed in both Bavaria and Berlin.) Following the war, the Vatican was extremely concerned that Soviet communism would infiltrate Europe and begin to undermine "Christianity." Just as it had so many times in the past, the Vatican needed an instrument with which it could defend both itself and Catholic Europe. Adolf Hitler was young and inexperienced, but there was something unique and special about him. Pius XI and Pacelli realized early that he could be just the man they needed.

Archbishop Pacelli probably did more than anyone else outside of Germany to bring Hitler to power. He endorsed the Nationalist-Nazi-Catholic coalition that ushered Hitler into the German chancellorship. He then directed the German Catholic Center Party and other German parliamentarians to vote for the Enabling Act, which gave Hitler dictatorial power.

This history is recorded in *Hitler's Pope*, a bestselling book by John Cornwell. A devout Catholic, Cornwell first set out to write a book about Pope Pius XII after becoming upset with allegations that Pius supported Hitler and the Third Reich. Cornwell was given access to the Vatican's archives while he researched for his book. Why not? The man intended to write a book defending the Vatican. But after discovering the facts, Cornwell's opinion changed. The faithful Catholic historian was shocked and astounded by what he read. The critics of Pius XII were right—in fact, it was worse than many knew.

After Pacelli moved from Bavaria to Rome in February 1930, he began spending weeks at a time in the company of Monsignor Ludwig Kaas, a Catholic priest and the leader of the German Catholic Center Party. During their time together, these two men brainstormed ideas for a concordat between Germany and the Vatican and discussed ways to bring a government to power in Berlin that would look favorably on such a concordat. As Hitler and the Nationalist Social Party grew more popular during the early 1930s, Pope Pius XI and Cardinal Pacelli encouraged Kaas and the Center Party leadership to explore the advantages of cooperation with the Nazis.

The Vatican was clearly working to help Hitler become chancellor.

The Vatican's meddling yielded results in January 1933, when Germany's governing coalition fell apart. Catholic Center Party deputy Franz von Papen persuaded German President Paul von Hindenburg to grant Hitler the chancellorship of a Nationalist-Nazi-Catholic coalition. Papen was to be vice chancellor.

Hitler was chancellor, but he still didn't have the authority to pass the German-Vatican concordat that Pacelli wanted.

That changed on March 23, 1933, when Hitler was given absolute power after parliamentarians in both the Reichstag and Reichsrat passed the Enabling Act. This act amended the Weimar Constitution to grant the German cabinet, which was under the totalitarian rule of Adolf Hitler, authority to enact laws without parliamentary approval. Unshackled from the German Constitution, Hitler was free to construct his Nazi empire.

Hitler banned Communists and many Social Democrats from voting on the Enabling Act. Still, he

needed assistance persuading the other parties and parliamentarians to vote “Yes.” Thankfully for him, he had Ludwig Kaas, the leader of the German Catholic Center Party, a Catholic priest—and a close friend of Cardinal Pacelli—on his side. Kaas persuaded parliamentarians from his own party and other parties to vote “Yes” to the Enabling Act. On the day of the vote, this influential politician and Catholic priest even delivered a speech in the Reichstag endorsing the Enabling Act.

Hitler also spoke that day. In his message he extolled the Catholic Church and underlined its importance in German history. It was evidence of a quid pro quo arrangement between Hitler and Kaas, an arrangement in which Kaas supported the Enabling Act and convinced others to support it, in return for favorable treatment from Hitler once he became dictator.

How often do you hear people talking about this history today?

The day after the Enabling Act was signed into law and Hitler was granted dictatorial powers, Ludwig Kaas traveled to Rome to, in his words, “investigate the possibilities for a comprehensive understanding between church and state.” His “investigation” was productive. Less than four months later, Nazi Germany formed a treaty—the first of the Third Reich—*with the Vatican!*

## GERMAN-VATICAN TREATY

Cardinal Pacelli and German Vice Chancellor Franz von Papen signed the historic Reich Concordat on July 20, 1933—*less than four months* after Hitler was officially granted the powers of a dictator.

Notice what John Toland wrote in *Adolf Hitler* concerning this concordat: “The church agreed to keep

priests and religion out of politics while Hitler, among other things, granted complete freedom to confessional schools throughout the country, a notable victory for German Catholics. His holiness welcomed Hitler's representative, Franz von Papen, 'most graciously and remarked how pleased he was that the German government now had at its head a man uncompromisingly opposed to communism and Russian nihilism in all its forms.'"

History was repeating itself. Just as it had done so many times in the past, the Vatican was supporting the creation of another tyrant in Europe. In return for its support, the Vatican would be protected from Hitler's tyranny and allowed to freely operate as it always had.

"The Vatican was so appreciative of being recognized as a full partner that *it asked God to bless the reich*," Toland wrote. "On a more practical level, *it ordered German bishops to swear allegiance to the National Socialist regime*. The new oath concluded with these significant words: 'In the performance of my spiritual office and in my solicitude for the welfare and interest of the German Reich, I will endeavor to avoid all detrimental acts which might endanger it.'"

Reading this history, one wonders how successful Hitler's Nazi Party would have been in its rise to power without the staunch support of Pope Pius XI and the Vatican. The Vatican and the Catholic Church had for many centuries been an influential political and ideological force in European politics. What could it have achieved if it had opposed Hitler and worked to undermine his ambitions?

Germany's ex-chancellor Heinrich Brüning had no doubts about who was primarily responsible for this nightmarish alliance. "Behind the agreement with Hitler stood not the pope, but the Vatican bureaucracy and its



### THE NAZIS AND THE VATICAN

Cardinal Pacelli and German Vice Chancellor Franz von Papen sign the Reich Concordat within months of Hitler being granted dictatorial powers.

BUNDESARCHIV

leader, *Pacelli*,” Brüning said in 1935. “He visualized an authoritarian state and an authoritarian church directed by the Vatican bureaucracy, the two to conclude an eternal league with one another.”

Read that powerful and condemning admission again. And remember, Cardinal Pacelli—*the man former Chancellor Brüning believed was more responsible than anyone else in bringing Hitler to power*—later became Pope Pius XII, the pope during the Second World War!

Most people know little about Hitler’s connection with Catholicism, but the truth is that Hitler and his cabal of leaders worked together with the Vatican hierarchy to resurrect the Holy Roman Empire. In fact, without the Vatican’s assistance it is possible Hitler would never have gotten control of Germany.

### PIUS XII AND THE JEWS

In a cabinet meeting six days before the signing of the Reich Concordat in July 1933, Hitler made a chilling statement about the imminent pact. This concordat

with the Vatican, he said, would create an atmosphere of confidence that would be “*especially significant in the urgent struggle against international Jewry.*”

Think about what he’s saying here. Hitler knew that an alliance with the Catholic Church would be advantageous to his “urgent struggle against international Jewry.” There are a couple of ways to interpret this. Did Hitler believe that the Vatican was an enemy of the Jews, and therefore a supporter of his objectives with the Jews? At the very least, Hitler was obviously confident that the Vatican would not do anything to prevent him from pursuing his genocidal ambitions toward Jews.

History testifies to Cardinal Pacelli’s opinion of the Jews. There is no evidence Cardinal Pacelli blinked an eye at Hitler’s horrific ambitions. Rather, as John Cornwell brings out in *Hitler’s Pope*, Pacelli had a habit of ignoring the plight of the Jews and turning a blind eye to other Nazi atrocities.

When he was made pope on March 2, 1939, Pacelli took on the name Pope Pius XII. As pope, Pius knew all about Hitler’s heinous strategy, called the Final Solution, to eradicate the Jewish people. Jewish groups and Allied officials *repeatedly* urged the pope to publicly condemn Nazi savagery. Finally, in December 1942, after two years of persistent requests, Pius delivered a radio address in which he lamented for the many thousands who “sometimes only by reason of their nationality or race are marked down for death or gradual extinction.”

That was Pius XII’s *strongest objection* to Hitler’s genocidal rampage.

He didn’t even identify Hitler by name, and there was no mention of Nazis or Jews.

There aren’t many ways to interpret this. The pope was

not ignorant of Hitler and his view of Jews. Pius, like the rest of humanity, was witness to the fruits of Hitler's labor, both toward Jews and other peoples. He undoubtedly had access to better intelligence and knew more of the details about what was happening than most people. Yet his response was so impotent. Why? Was it because he shared similar views with Hitler about the Jews?

Less than a year after his 1942 radio address, Pius witnessed Hitler's hatred of the Jews in a very personal way. In October 1943, nearly 400 German SS soldiers arrested Italian Jews in Rome's old ghetto, which is walking distance from the Vatican. All totaled, more than 1,000 Jews were rounded up and taken to a building called Collegio Militare, which was *located less than half a mile from the Vatican*. Trucks carting Jews even rumbled by St. Peter's Square so Nazi soldiers could see the famous church.

As you would expect, the pope was one of the first to be made aware of what was happening to his next-door neighbors. The Jews were held for two days at Collegio Militare before being put into cattle cars and dispatched to Auschwitz, where 80 percent were gassed within a week. The rest were made slaves.

Pope Pius XII was silent and did nothing to help the innocent Jews during their two-day confinement in a facility less than half a mile from the Vatican. He was the most powerful religious man in the world. When he spoke, people listened. Few leaders would have been able to pick up the phone and speak with Hitler directly, but Pope Pius XII was one of the few. At the very least he could have told the world what was happening and publicly denounced Hitler. He could have initiated a protest. Instead, he was silent. Why?





Journalist Ed Bradley recounted these events during a *60 Minutes* episode on March 19, 2000. During an interview with one of the 15 Jewish survivors, the survivor asked, “Didn’t the pope know where they were taking us? Didn’t he ask himself where those railroad tracks ended up? We were right under his window, but his voice wasn’t lifted. *Nobody came, not even to save a child.*”

Bradley relayed that question to Peter Gumpel, a Jesuit priest and eminent Catholic historian, who responded by explaining that Pius was unable to leave the Vatican because it was surrounded by German troops. The pope could have been arrested, Gumpel said. Bradley’s response was ideal: “But wouldn’t that be the kind of action that a true saint would have taken? Wouldn’t that have been what Christ would have done?” Gumpel was stumped. Finally, he replied and said that he didn’t know what Christ would have done. (That’s not a reassuring response coming from a man who is supposed to be an expert on Christ.)

It gets worse. Gumpel is one of the Vatican’s senior saint-makers and happened to be in charge of *Pope Pius XII’s beatification process* (the final step before being named a saint). Gumpel had spent three decades researching Pius’s life to see if he was worthy of sainthood. For 30 years he had been searching for evidence that would preclude Pope Pius XII from beatification. *And he said he hadn’t found any!*

During that *60 Minutes* program, Gumpel stated that he is “*totally convinced that [Pius] did what he could [to help Jews during World War II], that he was a holy person and that he should be beatified.*” When asked if the research Cornwell had uncovered and reported in *Hitler’s Pope* would have any bearing on the Vatican’s final decision, Gumpel said it would “have no effect whatsoever because

it's *totally worthless* from a historical point of view.”

“Totally worthless.” Really? Did Gumpel forget that a significant chunk of Cornwell’s research came from the Vatican’s own library?

## FOR BRUTAL CROATIA, BLESSINGS

We know the Vatican provided political and moral support to Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany before and during World War II. But did you know that the Vatican and Catholic representatives actually *participated* in some of the hideous activities of Hitler and his Nazi network, which was scattered all over Europe and North Africa?

In July 1997, the United States Treasury published a document proving the Vatican stored gold for the Croatian Nazi puppet regime during and after World War II. The Vatican dismissed the accusation as ridiculous. But when asked by Jewish organizations to open its archives and prove that the allegations were false, the Vatican refused. Why? The truth is, some of the Vatican’s most atrocious acts during the war occurred in the Balkans.

Conquering the Balkan Peninsula and bringing it under German control was important to Hitler. Controlling the Balkans would give him leverage over Russia, access to the Mediterranean, and a launching point into the Middle East. Hitler invaded Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941, and by April 17 had beaten the nation into submission. Following Yugoslavia’s defeat, a small corner of the country broke away from the capitulated government and formed a puppet state. Comprised of roughly 5 million Catholics and 3 million Serbians, the new regime was called the Independent State of Croatia.

Throughout the war this newly born puppet state was loyal to two entities—Adolf Hitler and the Vatican.

Croatia's first leader was Ante Pavelić, a fascist with a calculating mind and a cold heart. Pavelić's first action as leader was to raise an army. Called Ustashi, Pavelić's army quickly became one of the most terrifying and cruel forces Europe had ever seen. The Ustashi was staunchly Catholic. Its soldiers were Catholic by religion, and the central reason for its existence was the pursuit of an independent *Catholic* Croatia.

During the war the Ustashi sought the genocide of Jews and Serbs, and was responsible for the death of more than a million people. Killings were performed in some of the most gruesome ways imaginable. Ustashi soldiers were recorded to have torn victims apart limb by limb, slit people's throats with special knives, and removed organs one by one, and smashed people's heads with sledgehammers. Others were burned alive. No one was spared, and many of these vile acts were performed on children and infants. There are records of Ustashi soldiers cutting open pregnant mothers and ripping out the unborn child.

The Vatican was fully aware of the atrocities being performed by Pavelić and his army. Yet it never did anything meaningful to condemn and stop the carnage.

In fact, as Mark Aarons and John Loftus, two respected, award-winning authors, reveal in their book *Unholy Trinity*, the Vatican endorsed the behavior of the Ustashi and Croatia's Catholic leaders. From the start, Croatia enjoyed a "special relationship" with the Vatican, wrote Aarons and Loftus.

Pope Pius XII was aware of the atrocities when he met with Ante Pavelić in April 1941. The pope met with Pavelić again in May 1943, by which time the Nazi atrocities against the Serbs were irrefutably known. (One Italian journalist

interviewed Pavelić in his home and was shocked to find a large bowl of Serbian eyes the fascist leader had been collecting.) Yet, according to *Unholy Trinity*, “Pius himself promised to give Pavelić his personal blessing again. By this time, the Holy See possessed *abundant evidence* of the atrocities committed by his regime.”

Historical documentation shows that in some cases Catholic priests even joined the Ustashi in violently exterminating Serbs. *Ravens Wolves*, a small book by the late Monica Farrell, a once-devout Catholic who wrote multiple books documenting the shocking conduct of Catholic leaders, recalls a pogrom in the village of Slavonski Brod. “The Catholic priests, Guncevic and Marjanovich Dragutin, acted as police officials, and ordered the arrest of local Serbs, who were tortured and killed. They personally assisted in the executions of these unfortunate Serbs.”

*Ravens Wolves* provides multiple examples, even giving the location and names of the priests, in which Catholic leaders sanctioned and participated in the torture and murder of Jews and Serbs.

Alojzije Stepinac was the archbishop of Zagreb from 1937 to 1960. Following the war, Stepinac was found guilty of collaborating with the Ustashi in the murder of Serbs and Jews. He was sentenced to 16 years in prison, but was released after five years. Pope Pius XII made Stepinac a cardinal in 1952. In 1998, he was declared a martyr and beatified by Pope John Paul II.

This history of the Nazis and the Ustashi in Croatia during the Second World War is hard to read, and even harder to imagine happening. But remembering this history is important because it is a reminder of the deadly relationship between the Vatican and Nazi Germany.

## THE RATLINES

The Vatican's support of Nazi Germany went beyond helping Hitler become chancellor and then defending and endorsing his murderous activities. Historical records show that as the war wound down and an Axis victory became increasingly unlikely, the Vatican actually rescued many of the worst Nazi criminals.

Intelligence sources have confirmed that high-ranking Nazi ministers, civil servants, even Ante Pavelić himself, were able to disappear *with help from the Vatican's "ratlines"*—a postwar operation to protect Nazi leaders. At the time, the Vatican labeled these escapees “refugees.” But they were calloused killers who were key participants in Hitler's regime!

“For fugitive Nazis, all roads led to Rome,” write Aarons and Loftus.

“It is absurd to believe that 30,000 fugitive Nazis escaped to South America on the few U-boats remaining at the end of the war, or that they all made their own travel arrangements,” they write. “Draganovic's Ratline [the name given to the Vatican's smuggling operation] was truly professional, ensuring that many guilty war criminals reached safe havens. Often they did not end up in the remote jungles of South America, but settled instead in Britain, Canada, Australia and the United States ....”

The Vatican does not deny that it helped top German leaders escape Europe after the war. But it claims to have not known the identity of the men it aided. “The Vatican has consistently claimed that they were unaware of the identity of those who were undeserving of their humanitarian assistance. But some influential priests not only knew who the Nazis were, they actively sought them out and provided extra-special treatment” (*Unholy Trinity*).

Franz Stangl was one of the most ruthlessly efficient Nazi officials during the war and a commander in the Treblinka extermination camp. In 1948, he arrived in Rome looking for Alois Hudal, a Catholic bishop and rector of one of three seminaries for German priests in Rome. Hudal was well known throughout the Nazi underground. "Stangl described the power and influence of Hudal's extensive smuggling network for fugitive Nazis," Aarons and Loftus write.

Stangl later testified that Hudal had arranged "quarters in Rome where I was to stay till my papers came through. And he gave me a bit more money—I had almost nothing left." After several weeks, Hudal "called me in and gave me my new passport—a Red Cross passport ... [he] got me an entrance visa to Syria and a job in a textile mill in Damascus, and he gave me a ticket for the ship. So I went to Syria."

It would be hard to believe if it weren't so well documented! Why would high-ranking Catholic leaders working in the Vatican smuggle some of the sickest minds and most dangerous men of Nazi Germany to safety? There's only one rational explanation.

Simon Wiesenthal was responsible for Stangl's eventual recapture in Brazil in 1967. Wiesenthal is convinced that Bishop Hudal was also behind the smuggling of Adolf Eichmann, the most famous war criminal of World War II, a man known as "the architect of the Holocaust." Eichmann escaped from Europe after the war and remained hidden for 15 years before being captured.

"Wiesenthal believes that Hudal equipped Eichmann with a new identity as a Croatian refugee called 'Richard Klement,' and sent him to Genoa," Aarons and Loftus write. "There Eichmann was apparently hidden in a

## WHAT HAPPENED IN VIENNA?

---

**D**ID YOU KNOW THAT THE FOUNDATION OF HITLER'S ideology and worldview was laid in Vienna? He said it himself. Why Vienna? In *The Psychopathic God—Adolf Hitler*, Robert G. L. Waite wrote that Hitler insisted “that his early years in Vienna were absolutely crucial to his career.” Albert Speer, “who knew Hitler best during World War II, was convinced that the führer’s intellectual development stopped with the world as he had known it in Vienna in 1910.” Again, why Vienna?

Vienna is the heart of the Holy Roman Empire.

Hitler wrote about this critical period in Vienna in his book *Mein Kampf*: “This was the time in which the greatest change I was ever to experience took place in me. From a feeble cosmopolite I had turned into a fanatical anti-Semite.” Waite then continued: “It is difficult to overstate the importance to Hitler of his commitment to anti-Semitism. It meant almost everything to him.” However, the biggest change in Hitler was not becoming

monastery under Archbishop Siri’s charitable control, before finally being smuggled to South America.” All of Eichmann’s traveling expenses to South America were paid by Caritas, a Catholic relief organization.

“Official Vatican historian Father Robert Graham admits that Hudal might have helped ‘a handful, a mere handful of Nazi war criminals to escape,’” Aarons and Loftus write. “When Eichmann was arrested it was

a fanatical anti-Semite. That is only part of the story. There is another part most people have forgotten.

The Jews have traditionally been viewed by the world as God's chosen people. In Vienna, Hitler came to believe that God had *replaced* the Jews with *the Germans and the Holy Roman Empire*.

He believed *the Germans* were God's chosen people. This is why the crown jewels of that empire meant so much to Hitler. In 1938, at a rally in Nuremberg, "Hitler had brought from Vienna, after 140 years, *the insignia of the First Reich*—the Imperial Crown, the Orb of Empire, the Scepter and the Imperial Sword. At the presentation of these symbols of imperialism he *solemnly vowed that they would remain in Nuremberg forever*" (John Toland, *Adolf Hitler*).

Hitler had resurrected the symbols of the Holy Roman Empire and incorporated them into his Third Reich. Doesn't that reveal Hitler's supreme ambition? He was committed to the resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.

The crown jewels were to be a key part of the Third Reich, just as they were of the Holy Roman Empire going back hundreds of years. Hitler's foundational lesson in Vienna was about the Holy Roman Empire.

alleged he passed through Rome and got some help from Bishop Hudal. Hudal was asked about this and said, 'I don't know, I helped a lot of people and Eichmann may have been among them.'

What an admission.

"If Eichmann was a case of unauthorized assistance, he was certainly not the only instance. Hudal seemed to make mistakes with regularity. Wiesenthal recalls,

‘During my search for Eichmann I found out that many [war criminals] were living in monasteries, equipped by Hudal with false documents,’ showing they were refugees. One point is certain: Many war criminals who escaped to South America have gratefully acknowledged that they owed their freedom to the Austrian-born bishop” (ibid).

Bishop Hudal was known to be supportive of the Nazis. He openly supported Adolf Hitler and, during his trips to Germany in the 1930s, encouraged German Catholics to do the same. In a speech in Rome he said the philosophies of the German Reich “accord both with Christian and national values.” He even published a treatise in 1936 called *The Foundations of National Socialism*, officially sanctioned by the church, praising the Nazis.

“Apparently Hudal’s high Nazi profile did not harm his Vatican career,” Aarons and Loftus write. “[A]s Hudal’s views grew more stridently and publicly pro-Nazi, nothing was done either to discipline or remove him from this powerful post. Instead the Vatican promoted him in June 1933 from priest to titular bishop, an extremely rare honor for a relatively lowly rector of a teaching college.”

The Vatican was aware of exactly who Hudal was and what he believed: Instead of reprimanding and kicking him out, Pope Pius XII promoted him. Why?

“[Vienna Archdiocese Bishop] Jacob Weinbacher ... has no doubt that ‘Hudal was very close to [Pope] Pius XII ... they were friends.’ ... Far from being just another anonymous cleric on the fringes of the Vatican, ‘Hudal may well have been the sounding board for the pope in the German-speaking countries.’”

Imagine that. According to reports from Catholic officials, and documented by Aarons and Loftus, Hudal was close friends with Pope Pius XII!

When it became clear that Germany would lose the war, Hudal determined to do all he could to undermine the Allies' attempts to purge Europe of Nazism. "I felt duty bound after 1945 to devote my whole charitable work mainly to former National Socialists and fascists, especially to so-called 'war criminals,'" he said. Aarons and Loftus conclude: "Hudal's self-confessed activities are all the more controversial because he operated with the full authority of the Vatican."

When you consider how close Hudal was to the pope, it is accurate to conclude that Pope Pius XII was by far the greatest Nazi smuggler at the end of World War II.

Is this a surprise? Not in the slightest—not when you recall that Pius played a pivotal role in the rise of Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany, was the Catholic official responsible for facilitating the 1933 Reich Concordat between Nazi Germany and the Vatican, and was the Catholic official who as pope provided moral and spiritual backing for Hitler during World War II.

Moreover, it isn't the least bit surprising when you consider the history of the Holy Roman Empire and recall that the Vatican over the past 1,500 years has supported, embraced and exploited to its own advantage most of Europe's most terrifying and destructive regimes and dictators.

What is surprising is the fact that most people today cannot recognize or accept the existence of the Holy Roman Empire. Unaware of this history, they will be flabbergasted when it repeats itself and the seventh resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire strikes.

eight

---

# THE SEVENTH AND FINAL RESURRECTION— NOW HERE

“In only one way can this resurrected Holy Roman Empire be brought to fruition—by the ‘good offices’ of the Vatican, uniting church and state once again, with the Vatican astride and ruling.”

—HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

LOOKING AT EUROPE TODAY, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE the appearance of another Charlemagne, Napoleon or Hitler. The idea of Europe participating in another destructive global conflict, let alone initiating one, seems impossible and outrageous.

For most people, Europe's storied history—its dungeons and castles, its ancient weapons and renowned battlefields, its celebrated medieval past filled with royal and political intrigue—is valuable only as a lure for tourists. Europe's days of conquest and empire are done. The future, so many believe, belongs to America, China, Russia and Islam.

One can understand this perception. After all, the world hasn't been frightened by a European military since the Second World War. Europe continues to ward off economic and financial ruin, as well as social unrest and revolt. Europe is multicultural and sophisticated, and a world leader in defending human rights and environmental activism. The European Union itself is an inefficient, cumbersome collection of states beset with conflicting interests, bogged down by bureaucracy, and seemingly incapable of ever becoming a formidable global leader, let alone a lethal imperial superpower.

But 1,500 years of European history should warn us against underestimating the Holy Roman Empire—and the Vatican.

WE MUST NOT MERELY LOOK AT EUROPE IN ITS CURRENT STATE. IT MUST BE STUDIED IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT. And we ought to consider Europe's potential. The EU is home to 448 million people, almost 6 percent of the global population. Measured in terms of purchasing power parity, its economy is three fourths the size of China's and almost as large as America's. About 15 percent

of all the world's economic activity happens in the EU. EU nations have 1.9 million personnel in their armed forces. Europe is led by one of the world's strongest, healthiest and most popular countries: Germany.

Europe has great potential to become a dominant financial, political and military power.

And as we have seen, Europe also has a long history with imperialism and global domination. Imagine if these elements of power were marshaled into a cohesive, dynamic geopolitical entity—a force that was once again directed at resurrecting the Roman Empire?

What if such a terrifying beast is close to being formed already?

## EU—A CATHOLIC CREATION

The keynote prophecy of Herbert W. Armstrong's 55-year ministry was about the seventh and final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire. As early as the mid-1930s, during the Second World War, and even immediately after the war—when the battlefields of Europe were still smoldering and Germany was a wasteland—Mr. Armstrong warned that Germany would once again emerge as the leader of a united European superpower that would plunge mankind into World War III.

Informed by Bible prophecy and history, Mr. Armstrong explained that while Germany would lead this final resurrection, it would be underpinned by the same religious entity that inspired all the other resurrections. “The politicians cannot [unite Europe] by themselves,” he wrote in a co-worker letter on January 23, 1980. “*Only with the collaboration of the pope* can they do it” (emphasis added throughout).

In the January 1979 *Plain Truth*, Mr. Armstrong wrote:

“I have been proclaiming and writing, ever since 1935, that the final one of the seven eras of the Holy Roman Empire is coming in our generation—a ‘United States of Europe,’ combining 10 nations or groups of nations in Europe—with a union of church and state! The nations of Europe have been striving to become reunited. They desire a common currency, a single combined military force, a single united government. They have made a start in the Common Market [which later became the EU]. They are now working toward a common currency. Yet, on a purely political basis, they have been totally unable to unite. In only one way can this resurrected Holy Roman Empire be brought to fruition—by the ‘good offices’ of the Vatican, uniting church and state once again, with the Vatican astride and ruling (Revelation 17:1-5).”

Did you know that most of the EU’s “founding fathers” were staunch Catholics?

To men such as Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Alcide De Gasperi, Otto von Habsburg and Konrad Adenauer, the European project was a religious ambition as much as it was a political aspiration. In recognition of their pursuit of a Catholic European empire, the Catholic Church is in the process today of canonizing both Schuman and De Gasperi. Again, these men were politicians, not priests.

Most people today have no understanding about how centrally involved the Vatican and the Catholic Church were in the creation of what we now know as the European Union. Notice this 1962 article from *Topic*, a prominent magazine in Britain at the time: “The Vatican, usually cautious over political changes not of its own inspiration, now considers the Common Market the work of divine providence. Not since the times of Spain’s Charles v has

a Roman Catholic political force been so strongly welded. Not since the end of the Holy Roman Empire has the Holy See been offered a Catholic rallying point like the Common Market. If the 'Pact of Rome,' which created the Common Market, had been signed within the Vatican walls, it could not have favored the church more."

In *The Principality and Power of Europe*, a book exposing the origins of the European Union, Adrian Hilton writes, "Europe's leaders and the Roman Catholic Church are still working together towards the common goal of unity. Many of Europe's political leaders ... see a crucial role for the Roman Catholic Church in their efforts, providing a *powerfully cohesive common religion* to hold Europe together politically."

How many people today realize that the Vatican is one of the chief architects of European unification?

## PAPAL INTERVENTION

"Since World War II, each pope has thrown his weight behind moves toward the creation of a supranational European union," Adrian Hilton continues. "Pope John XXIII insisted that Roman Catholics should be 'in the front ranks' of the unification effort. In 1963, Pope Paul VI declared: 'Everyone knows the tragic history of our century. If there is a means of preventing this from happening again, it is the construction of a peaceful, organic, united Europe.' In 1965, he further observed: 'A long, arduous path lies ahead. However, the Holy See hopes to see the day born when a new Europe will arise, rich with the fullness of its traditions.'"

"Perhaps the most concerning of Paul VI's pronouncements on European unification came in Rome, in 1975, when he declared: 'Can it not be said that it is

faith, the Christian faith, *the Catholic faith that made Europe?* He continued: ‘It is there that *our mission* as bishops in Europe takes on a gripping perspective. *No other human force in Europe* can render the service that is confided to us, promoters of the faith, to reawaken Europe’s Christian soul, where its unity is rooted.”

During the 1970s and 1980s, after it had helped establish what eventually became the European Union, the Vatican played a key role in drawing Eastern Europe, then under Soviet yoke, into the burgeoning European empire. Pope John Paul II in particular was instrumental in prying much of Eastern Europe from Communist Russia.

Consider Poland. When Pope John Paul II returned to his native Poland, communism wilted in his presence! Here is how the Associated Press reported it: “Martial law had crushed the church-backed Solidarity labor movement, and Poland’s Communist rulers expected a chastened Pope John Paul II ready for compromise when he visited his homeland in 1983. Instead, his voice rising, the pontiff lectured a surprised [Communist] party chief, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, as the nation watched on television. History would be his judge, the pope warned, demanding that union rights be restored for the Soviet bloc’s first free trade union [Solidarity]” (Jan. 9, 1998).

In the face of the pope’s demand, the Communist Jaruzelski eventually capitulated. The Vatican-funded Catholic Solidarity movement triumphed, and Poland broke the Communist yoke and quickly sought a close attachment with the European Union. Just as Herbert Armstrong had prophesied, the Vatican had driven one of many major wedges under the Iron Curtain that was destined to help crack it and eventually bring about its collapse!

A news release by ABC correspondent Bill Blakemore recognized the power of this papal diplomacy: “Not only had John Paul II ignited a nonviolent revolution when he first returned as pope in 1979, but by 1989 he had guided it with patient force till it won—the Polish Solidarity movement spread until the Berlin Wall came down and the Communists went away.”

Just as it had so many times in the past, the Vatican was paving the way for Europe to emerge as a world power. The Vatican was once again uniting Europe!

## **BENEDICT XVI**

During the 1990s and 2000s, as the EU expanded and invited in countries that had less history with Catholicism, it appeared Catholicism’s influence within the EU was waning. The Vatican recognized this perception and moved quickly to restore the church to the heart of European power—a task still underway today.

Joseph Ratzinger, the German cardinal elected in April 2005 to replace Pope John Paul II, was instrumental to the revival of traditional Catholicism and the restoration of Europe’s Catholic roots.

Upon taking office, Cardinal Ratzinger took the name Pope Benedict XVI, a title inspired by the life and work of Benedict of Nursia, a fifth-century monk venerated as the patron saint of Europe and the founder of the Benedictine monasteries. Benedict of Nursia was instrumental in advancing the influence of Catholicism throughout Europe during the early Middle Ages. The selection of Benedict as his namesake showed that Ratzinger considered it his duty to facilitate the revival of that ancient church-state union, the Holy Roman Empire.

During his first speech as pope in 2005, Benedict

praised his namesake and explained how he laid the groundwork for European unification. “[Benedict] represents a fundamental point of reference for the unity of Europe and a strong reminder of the unrenounceable Christian roots of its culture and civilization,” he stated.

During his first weekly papal audience in 2005, Pope Benedict used the occasion to express what the *New York Times* said “may become a central theme of his pontificate: the Christian roots of Europe” (April 29, 2005).

Under this pope, the Vatican experienced a renaissance of Catholic tradition and conservatism. Benedict’s Vatican, as many noted, had a special affection for medieval doctrine and practices, and emerged as perhaps the most notable defender of tradition. Together, Benedict and the Vatican waged war on moral relativism, compromise and secularism.

By the time he resigned in February 2013, Benedict had made great strides in eliminating liberalism within the church, reviving traditional and conservative Catholic dogma and practices, and restoring Europe’s “Christian roots.” Despite his success, however, there was still much work to be done.

## ENTER POPE FRANCIS

For decades, Herbert Armstrong forecast that two specific threats would propel Europe to coalesce as a global superpower and, with the Vatican’s guidance, manifest as the final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1984, Mr. Armstrong warned that a massive banking crisis “could suddenly result in triggering European nations to unite as a new world power larger than either the Soviet Union or the U.S.” (co-worker letter, July 22, 1984). We have witnessed just such a crisis.

The banking crisis that began in America in 2008 and quickly rippled over to inflict terrible damage on Europe has initiated major political and financial changes in Europe. It is forcing—albeit in fits and spurts, with a lot of tension and debate—further integration and federalization of Europe’s economies and finances. Global financial upheaval is, and will continue, to forge Europe into a financial superpower.

Mr. Armstrong also warned that an empowered Russia would spur Europe to unite. In his January 23, 1980 co-worker letter, he warned that fear of Russia “will be the spark to bring the heads of nations in Europe together with the Vatican to form a ‘United Nations of Europe.’” This too is happening. The belligerent behavior of Russian President Vladimir Putin alarms Europe. Russia’s emergence as an aggressive superpower is forging, and will continue to forge, Europe into a powerful and efficient political and military superpower.

Although these two crises have given Europe motive to unite, we must remember where the spiritual leadership and inspiration to integrate originates. Just as it has so many times in the past, the Vatican is critical to helping Europe integrate in response to the dual threats of financial ruin and a belligerent Russia. Consider the works of Pope Francis.

The selection of Argentine Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio as successor to Pope Benedict XVI in March 2013 caught many by surprise. He is the first non-European pope in more than 1,200 years, the first-ever pope from the Americas, and the antithesis of the ultratraditionalist that many assumed would replace Benedict XVI. Inconspicuous and humble in appearance, Bergoglio struck many as lacking in reputation, in theological

pedigree, in charisma and personality. Many wondered: Could Bergoglio, an outsider, a non-European, a man seemingly more interested in the poor than in politics, increase the Vatican's power in Europe, unite the Continent, then lead the prophesied Holy Roman Empire?

It wasn't long before the answers came. Within eight months of becoming pope, Francis was arguably the most popular and loved man on Earth, the hope of millions, and *Time* magazine's Person of the Year. The enthusiasm he has brought to the church is so dramatic it has its own name: the Francis Effect.

Across the planet, public support of the Catholic Church is increasing. Church attendance is up. Conversions are up. The pope is widely adored and admired, even among non-Catholics. Francis has worked wonders among the church's lukewarm, disillusioned laity. "[W]hat makes this pope so important is the speed with which he has captured the imaginations of millions who had given up on hoping for the church at all," wrote *Time* (Dec. 11, 2013).

## ***JOY OF THE GOSPEL***

*Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium*) was the title of the pope's November 2013 apostolic exhortation, a document that encapsulates Francis's vision for mankind. Its message is powerful, transformative and, in the context of history and Bible prophecy, deeply concerning. John Thavis, author and Vatican expert, described the pope's exhortation as a "remarkable and radical document, one that ranges widely and challenges complacency at every level."

He described it as the "Magna Carta for church reform" (Reuters, Nov. 26, 2013).

*Evangelii Gaudium* was a direct response to the global financial crisis. The exhortation covers a range of subjects, but it is especially striking for its tough and uncompromising appraisal of the global financial system, particularly capitalism. Francis attacked unfettered capitalism as “a new tyranny.” He condemned income inequality, the “culture of prosperity,” and “a financial system which rules rather than serves.”

Cloaked as a defense of the poor, the missive was taken by many as a denunciation of capitalism. Pope Francis demanded, in the words of Reuters, an “*overhaul of the financial system*” (ibid).

While the pope’s message sounds radical in modern context, it is nothing more than a restatement of long-standing Catholic social doctrine. The new financial system the pope called for is, in essence, the same financial system the Catholic Church has used in all other resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire.

For the first few resurrections of that empire, this system was feudalism. Within this system, the pope, as “God’s representative on Earth,” is the supreme authority. He delegates some of that authority to kings, who in turn delegate to lords, who delegate to knights, and so on. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII brought this system into the modern era of firms, trade unions and businessmen. Feudalism was updated and became the Catholic principle of subsidiarity. In essence, Pope Leo’s analysis was this: Marxism fails because it concentrates too much power with the national leaders; it gives them the capacity to do great evil and there is nothing to stop them. Capitalism avoids this; the problem with it, however, is that it is intrinsically selfish and fails to look after the poor. The Catholic solution is a strong, almost Marxist state with

the wealth and power to take care of the poor. To prevent the national leaders from wielding their considerable power unjustly, the Catholic Church would also have major power. This way, the “good” of the church prevents the national leaders from abusing their power. These “benevolent” rulers then ensure everyone is treated fairly.

This is simply a modernization of the same Catholic economic system that has ruled Europe six times before. The Catholic Church is championing the plight of the poor to regain its central economic role.

As Europe struggles with high levels of unemployment, Pope Francis’s message about transforming the global financial system to defend the poor is very popular. Francis is an outspoken champion of Europe’s poor and unemployed. The economic crisis in Europe will intensify until the pope is finally encouraged to impose his solution. This is understandable. Millions of people are disconcerted and disillusioned with the current system of politics and finance. But while the current system is inept, deeply flawed, and entirely unsustainable, is the Vatican’s solution right for mankind?

The Catholic religion has presided over many governments, societies and economies in the past. Not one has been successful.

### ***BE PRAISED***

Pope Francis’s second encyclical, *Laudato Si* (*Be Praised*), published in June 2014, is a continuation of the imperialistic message of *Evangelii Gaudium*. In *Laudato Si*, Francis explores the issues of world poverty and environmental destruction, two very real problems. But it is his solution to these issues that is most telling—and alarming.

In *Laudato Si*, Francis quotes a dramatic statement from his predecessor, Pope Benedict xvi. “To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: for all this, there is urgent need of a true world political authority ....”

The pope articulates his message well, and his aspirations seem to be noble and selfless. Poverty and environmental degradation are serious problems, and we desperately need a solution. But is the solution the establishment of a “world political authority”?

Can you think of a single instance of a supreme authority ruling with equity, tolerance and justice, for the benefit of every subject?

Given the flawed nature of Western systems, Francis explained, “it is essential to devise stronger and more efficiently organized international institutions, with functionaries who are appointed fairly by agreement among national governments, and empowered to impose sanctions.” When has such an endeavor produced positive results?

It is important to recognize that the creation of a supreme, all-powerful authority is not simply the pope’s opinion or aspiration—it is a declaration of intent. Francis is actively working for the establishment of a new system of world government.

One of the core themes of both *Laudato Si* and *Evangelii Gadium* is that Western-style government and finance are deeply flawed and therefore need to be destroyed and replaced. The pope is right. Our systems

of government and finance are flawed and in desperate need of replacing. But Catholic solutions have been tried before, multiple times, and failed each time—usually after terrible pain and suffering.

The Vatican's encyclicals are patently anti-Western and have a special venom for the United States. The attack on "unfettered capitalism," for example, was clearly directed at the United States. On several occasions he has condemned "the great powers"—the Allies of World War II—for not bombing German concentration camps or the railway lines leading to them during World War II. He also condemned the "great powers" for "looking the other way" during the Armenian genocide 40 years earlier.

Such finger-pointing is astonishing. Francis is the leader of the church that endorsed the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler, that turned a blind eye to Hitler's destruction of 6 million Jews, and that perpetuated Nazism by helping Nazis escape Europe following the war. And he is disappointed with America and Britain for not doing enough to rescue the Jews during World War II?

It is no coincidence that these same "great powers" are the nations responsible for building the current world order. It was the Allies—Britain, America, the Soviet Union and France—that received the first permanent seats on the UN Security Council. The UN itself and many other global bodies are of their design. Yet the pope's words are filled with hate and anger against these powers.

The pope we have today might appear to endorse the United Nations, the closest thing to a "world political authority," but his definition of the UN as a "true world political authority" clearly does not include the Allies, at

least not in a meaningful role. It is hard to imagine him endorsing Russia and China as the new leaders of his “world political authority.” So, who does Francis envision being in charge of this new world authority?

The answer is evident, both within the encyclicals and in history: It is the Roman Catholic Church.

As we have seen through this book, Pope Francis’s message is entirely consistent with history. Pope Gregory, during the Investiture Controversy, pushed “a theory of papal world-government.” Pope Urban proclaimed, “In one sense the whole world is exile for a Christian, and in another *the whole world is his country*.” And if the pope is the head of all true Christians, as the church claims, then doesn’t that put the Catholic Church at the head of the world?

The clue is in the name—the “catholic” or “universal” church.

## THE VATICAN AS A POLITICAL FORCE

Since he became pope, Francis has wielded decisive influence in two key global political issues: Cuba and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

In December 2014, U.S. President Barack Obama surprised the world when he announced that after 53 years of hostility America would restore diplomatic ties with Cuba. The terms of the deal completely favored Cuba. Cuba did not have to abandon communism or reform its dictatorial governance. In practical terms, the U.S. got nothing out of the deal.

Pope Francis played an instrumental role in President Obama’s decision. In early summer 2014, the pope appealed to both leaders by letter, urging them to exchange prisoners and improve relations. The Vatican

later hosted a secret meeting between the two sides in Rome. In fact, the Vatican's involvement in this situation goes back to 2012, when Pope Benedict XVI began pressuring the U.S. to normalize relations with Cuba.

"Francis is a master of blending the spiritual with the political," wrote National Public Radio's Rome-based senior Europe correspondent, Sylvia Poggioli. "[He] has embraced the bully pulpit of the papacy, emerging as a daring, independent broker on the global stage" (Dec. 25, 2014).

Doesn't this bring to mind the scene described in Revelation 17 of a great religion "sit[ting] on many waters," controlling and influencing the "inhabitants of the earth," and interfering with and reigning "over the kings of the earth"?

Pope Francis was at it again in spring 2015. On May 13, the Vatican announced that it had formally recognized the "state of Palestine" in a newly finalized treaty with the Palestinians. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas visited the Vatican in mid-May. During the visit, the pope effectively gave his approval of all the acts of terror committed by the Palestinian leader and his followers, even telling the Palestinian terrorist leader, "You are an angel of peace."

Critics of Israel and backers of Palestinian statehood were elated by the Vatican's announcement. The movement to recognize a Palestinian state has gained momentum in recent years, particularly within the United Nations, and this endorsement from the Vatican was huge. Gaining the support of humanity's most respected and admired leader could be just the boost needed to get the project of Palestinian statehood over the finish line.

These examples show that the pope clearly has his own foreign-policy agenda. He talks with leaders around the world and even makes major interventions in some of the top issues facing the world today: the economic crisis, the Middle East, America's foreign relations and more.

Again, these are apt examples of the scene described in Revelation 17 and 18. Revelation 18 even says that "the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." This religion even gets involved with the global financial system.

Isn't this incredible? The Apostle John prophesied almost 2,000 years ago of a great religion involving itself in world politics and even influencing the global economy.

Pope Francis, like so many pontiffs before him, is fulfilling this prophecy. He is attempting to set up the church to rule over or influence the kings of the Earth—to make rulings through new "enforceable international agreements."

## THE VATICAN'S WEAPON?

One of the great lessons evident within each of the past manifestations of the Holy Roman Empire is that the Vatican always works through a specific individual and people. During the first resurrection, the Vatican's man was Justinian. During the second, it was Charlemagne. During the sixth resurrection, it was Adolf Hitler at the helm of Nazi Germany.

If the Holy Roman Empire is going to rise again, we should expect the Vatican to once again work with one nation specifically, and even one individual. The identity of this nation is obvious.

Germany today is Europe's undisputed and unchecked leader, politically, financially and militarily. The financial

crisis that began in 2008 has empowered Berlin, which, compared to the rest of Europe and the world, is in robust financial and economic health. Germany has had to rescue multiple European states from bankruptcy, a process that has augmented Berlin politically and created a distinct master-servant relationship between Germany and much of the rest of Europe.

Germany's ascension is so obvious that many mainstream and respected journalists and politicians today talk openly about Germany's Fourth Reich. In its March 21, 2015, issue, Germany's *Der Spiegel*—a respected magazine with a circulation of more than 1 million—explicitly compared modern Germany to the Holy Roman Empire. It spoke of how the term *reich* simply refers to “a dominion, with a central power exerting control over many different peoples. According to this definition, would it be wrong to speak of a German Reich in the economic realm? ... An empire is in play, at least in the economic realm. The eurozone is clearly ruled by Germany, though Berlin is not unchallenged. It does, however have a significant say in the fates of millions of people from other countries.”

*Der Spiegel* is far from the only voice espousing this view. Consider just a few observations from the past few years.

Simon Heffer, *Daily Mail*, August 17, 2011: “Where Hitler failed by military means to conquer Europe, modern Germans are succeeding through trade and financial discipline. Welcome to the Fourth Reich.” March 29, 2013: “History shows it is, always, only a matter of time before Germany ends up dominating Europe. After years of refusing to assert itself, Germany's time has come again. The Fourth Reich is here without

a shot being fired: and the rest of Europe, and the world, had better get used to it.”

Stephen Green, *Telegraph*, June 23, 2015: “Germany finds itself at the geographic and economic center—and therefore increasingly the political center too—of the new Europe. No longer do all roads lead to Paris, but to Berlin.”

Nigel Farage, former leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party, in the European Parliament, September 2010: “We are now living in a German-dominated Europe—something that the European project was actually supposed to stop—something that those that went before us actually paid a heavy price in blood to prevent.”

Peter Osborne, *Daily Telegraph*, July 21, 2011: “Germany has come very close to realizing Bismarck’s dream of an economic empire stretching from Central Europe to the Eastern Mediterranean.” March 5, 2015: “This marks a vital turning point in the postwar world. Germany has long been the dominant economic power in the European Union. With Ms. Merkel in charge, it is now turning that economic power into diplomatic power.”

Martin Wolf, *Financial Times*, May 8, 2012: “This is not a monetary union. It is far more like an empire.”

Nicholas Kulich, *New York Times*, September 10, 2010: “In ways large and small Germany is flexing its muscles and reasserting a long-repressed national pride. Dozens of recent interviews across the country, with workers and businessmen, politicians and homemakers, artists and intellectuals, found a country more at ease with itself and its symbols, like its flag and its national anthem—a people still aware of their country’s history, but less willing to let it dictate their actions.”

It is beyond dispute: The EU now is a German-dominated, German-led world power.

The resurrection of the seventh and final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire is undoubtedly going to be presided over *by the Vatican and Germany*.

This too was prophesied.

## GOD'S ROD OF CORRECTION

The book of Isaiah contains many prophecies for the end time. One of those prophecies is in Isaiah 10:5, where God says, “O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.” It is easy to prove that the Germans today are the modern descendants of biblical Assyria. (Request our free reprint “The Remarkable Identity of the German People.”) But here in Isaiah 10, God specifically identifies the Assyrians as the “rod of mine anger.”

God continues: “I will send him [Germany] against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets” (verse 6). The German-led Holy Roman Empire is a tool in God’s hands. God uses this rod to correct a “hypocritical” nation—referring to modern Israel, specifically America and Britain.

Notice verse 7: “Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so ....” There is a specific individual leading the Holy Roman Empire, an end-time Charlemagne or Hitler. This man, at least when he first comes to power, does not intend on inflicting terrible carnage. But he experiences a change of heart, and as the verse says, “... it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.”

This man will lead the Holy Roman Empire into World War III.

God also discusses this German-led, Catholic Holy Roman Empire in the book of Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 23, the prophet describes a scenario where Britain and America are “dot[ing] on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours” (verse 5). Britain, the U.S. and the Jewish state draw close to Assyria.

In this prophecy, the term *Assyria* (Germany) is used interchangeably with *Babylonians* and *Chaldeans* (see verses 14-18)—referring to the people from the region of Babylon and Chaldea. Genesis 10 and 11 show that the Assyrians were a prominent and leading race in ancient Babylon, and worked closely with the Chaldeans. Together, these two races were the dominant power in ancient Babylon.

Prophetically speaking, the terms *Babylonians* and *Chaldeans* refer to the Holy Roman Empire, the roots of which, as we have seen, extend all the way back to ancient Babylon. Today as in the past, Assyria, or Germany, leads the collection of peoples that comprise the resurrected Holy Roman Empire.

Ezekiel 23:24-25 reveal the consequences of Israel's naive and foolish fling with this empire: “And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people, which shall set against thee buckler and shield and helmet round about: and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments. And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire.”

This prophecy describes a horrific and sudden German double cross of Britain, the U.S. and the Jewish state.

The Prophet Habakkuk also had much to say about the end-time Catholic-inspired, German-led Holy Roman Empire. In Habakkuk 1:6, God says, “For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation ....” *Chaldeans* refers to this same Holy Roman Empire, which is led by Germany.

Notice how God describes Germany and its empire here: “For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat” (verses 6-8).

It is a terrifying scene, in which this “bitter and hasty nation” storms through the land destroying and devouring everything in its path!

It is like World War II all over again, but on a far greater scale!

The *Jerusalem Bible* renders verse 7, “A people feared and dreaded, from their might proceeds their right, their greatness.” If you know anything about secular and biblical history, you know about whom God is talking. The German people are warriors whose strength gives them the “*right*” to do anything they want, anytime they want.

Verse 11 says: “Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power

unto *his god*.” This is talking about the specific individual leading the Holy Roman Empire. This man is discussed further in Daniel 8. But notice: The mind of the man who leads this political beast will *change*. He will come under the possession of a powerful and evil spirit being. This being is Satan the devil, mentioned throughout Scripture (Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2).

The *power of Satan* will be behind a revived and terrifying Nazi Germany!

Can you begin to see what is happening on the world scene today? One of the most stunning geopolitical developments this world has witnessed since World War II is the unification and revival of Germany. The postwar transformation of this nation—from rubble to Europe’s greatest power and the absolute leader of the growing European superstate—is remarkable. But it has not happened by accident!

As we have seen, a great amount of thought and planning has been invested in restoring Germany as a global power and cementing Berlin as the head of the superstate we call the European Union. Just as it has so many times throughout history, the Vatican has been central to the rise of Germany and the unification of Europe!

Whether you believe this or not, this is reality. The seventh and final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire is now forming with lightning speed. Very soon now, the horrible history explained in this book will be a living reality.

The 21st century is about to have its own Hitler, its own deadly European empire, and its own terrible history.

To survive, to remain sane, to maintain any semblance of hope and optimism, we must immerse our minds in

God's ultimate plan. God's prophecies are not confined to the horrible, terrifying events that unfold in the end time. Truly, the grim prophecies are merely stepping-stones to the most exciting and incredible, and hopeful, prophecies you will ever read.

Before we conclude, it's imperative that we immerse our minds in the incredible vision of what comes after the seventh and final resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire.

nine

---

# WHAT COMES AFTER THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE?

“... I am God, and there is none like me,  
Declaring the end from the beginning,  
and from ancient times  
the things that are not yet done,  
saying, My counsel shall stand ....”

—ISAIAH 46:9-10

**T**HE HISTORY OF THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE—AND THE truth that it was created, led and exploited in each manifestation by the Catholic Church—is beyond dispute. It is proved true by recorded history, thorough scholarship, and museums and archaeological excavations full of relics and artifacts.

It is now time to consider more thoroughly what the *Bible* reveals about the Holy Roman Empire.

In Chapters 1 and 2, we considered the Apostle John's dramatic vision described in Revelation 17. In particular, we concentrated on the woman, or church, of Revelation 17, who was "sit[ting] upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" (verse 3).

This church was riding—she was guiding, empowering, leading—a "beast" that had seven heads and 10 horns.

The following verses show that under this woman's inspiration and leadership, the beast performed many cruel and mighty works. This beast was the woman's instrument of destruction, her main vehicle for expanding her power, her chosen weapon for conquering and subjugating great portions of the Earth.

The "beast" mentioned in Revelation 17 is the Holy Roman Empire, which, as we have seen, was comprised of seven consecutive resurrections, or seven governments—or "seven heads"!

Can you believe the Holy Roman Empire was prophesied? Will you?

The Bible contains a lot of prophecy, much more than people realize. One third of the Bible is prophecy, and 90 percent of that prophecy pertains to our time. But remember, the entire Bible was completed nearly 2,000

years ago. Some of the Bible's earliest prophecies were written 1,400 years prior.

Think about that: God forecast the major events and trends unfolding in today's world between roughly 1,900 and 3,400 years ago. For what purpose? That is simple: to prove He is real.

Fulfilled prophecy is the greatest proof we have of God's existence!

But think further about the audience God is especially trying to reach with fulfilled prophecy. It can only be observed and accepted by people who have seen evidence of its fulfillment. And most prophecy pertains to our time *today*. Many biblical prophecies have only begun to be fulfilled in the last century, especially in the last three decades.

Human beings today, *more than at any other moment in history*, have seen Bible prophecies fulfilled. There has *never* been more evidence of fulfilled prophecy. And evidence of prophecies being fulfilled is piling up weekly.

The point is, mankind today has more proof than at any other time in human history of God's existence!

Yet sadly, mankind's belief in the true God is practically bankrupt. Belief in the Bible has dwindled epically. Concerning God and religion, humanity is more ignorant, more confused and more hostile than ever. Humanity has almost completely lost sight of God.

The Bible is literally full of prophecies serving the same function as the Holy Roman Empire. These prophecies are clear, vivid and detailed. And they were written millennia before they were due to be fulfilled. Moreover, they exist to prove to you—*right now*—that God exists, that He reigns supreme, that the Bible is His Word, and that He has a plan for mankind.

Bible prophecy is truly one of God's greatest gifts to mankind. It is proof of God's love for mankind, and for you.

## THE IMAGE OF DANIEL 2

Before we study further into specific prophecies about the Holy Roman Empire, we must put human history into broader prophetic context.

Daniel 2 is the key to unlocking world history. As Gerald Flurry writes in *Daniel Unlocks Revelation*, "The Daniel 2 image gives an overview of history and prophecy like nothing else in the Bible. It is the main tool God uses to unlock the book of Revelation!"

In Daniel 2 we read about a detailed and riveting dream King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had in the seventh century B.C. In it, he saw a great image, or statue.

Verses 32-33 show that the statue Nebuchadnezzar saw was made of four distinct materials: "This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay."

This image was standing tall and menacing, when suddenly, a stone from outer space came hurtling down and collided with it, annihilating the image and grinding it to dust. Then this stone became a great mountain that covered the whole planet (verses 34-35).

King Nebuchadnezzar was confused and disturbed. He called in his magicians and soothsayers, and demanded that they tell him what he had dreamed and then give its interpretation. The magicians had no idea what Nebuchadnezzar's dream was about, let alone what it might have meant.

Residing in Babylon at the time was a Jew named Daniel, a young prophet with the God-given talent to

# The Reign

## CHALDEAN EMPIRE

*1st head of prophetic Babylon*  
625–538 B.C.

## MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE

*2nd head of prophetic Babylon*  
558–330 B.C.

## GREEK EMPIRE

*3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th heads  
of prophetic Babylon*  
333 B.C.

## ROMAN EMPIRE

*7th head of prophetic Babylon*  
31 B.C.–A.D. 476  
(deadly wound A.D. 476)

1st horn A.D. 429–533

2nd horn A.D. 476–493

3rd horn A.D. 493–554

4th horn A.D. 554

5th horn A.D. 774

6th horn A.D. 962

7th horn A.D. 1520

8th horn A.D. 1805

9th horn A.D. 1870–1945

10th horn Today

(First three horns not ridden by woman and)



# of Gentile Kingdoms



**Daniel 7:4**



**Daniel 7:5**



**Daniel 8:3-4, 20**



**Daniel 7:6**



**Daniel 8:5**

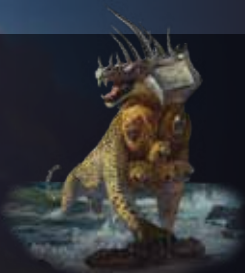


**Daniel 8:8**



**Daniel 7:7**

Vandals  
Heruli  
Ostrogoths  
Imperial Restoration  
Frankish Kingdom  
Holy Roman Empire  
Habsburg Dynasty  
Napoleon's Kingdom  
Italy & Fascist Regimes  
United Europe



**Revelation 13:1-2**



**Revelation 17:3**

destroyed at behest of pope) (Little horn, Daniel 7:8, 20-22, 24-27)

interpret dreams. Through Daniel, God explained to King Nebuchadnezzar that his dream was actually a prophecy of future world events.

“Thou, O king,” Daniel began, “art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. ... Thou art this head of gold” (verses 37-38). How clear: King Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian-Chaldean Empire, which we can read about in history books, was the head of gold.

Daniel continued: “And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken” (verses 39-42).

Daniel was prophesying the succession of four world-ruling empires. The first, symbolized by the head of gold, was Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian-Chaldean Empire of the seventh century B.C. The second, symbolized by the chest and arms of silver, was the Medo-Persian Empire, which lasted from the sixth century to the mid-fourth century B.C. The third, symbolized by the belly of bronze, was the Greek Empire, which emerged in the fourth century B.C. The fourth, symbolized by two legs of iron—picturing two distinct regions, east and west—was the Roman Empire, which began in 31 B.C.

Now, check your history. You will find that the succession of these empires is recognized and chronicled in detail in history books the world over. Of course, other civilizations and peoples, many of them influential and impressive, existed concurrently, *but these four were the dominant civilizations of their time.*

What is amazing is that you can prove the fulfillment of this biblical prophecy by checking the contents page of most Western civilization textbooks!

## DANIEL'S BEASTS

The four successive world-ruling empires identified in Daniel 2 are also identified in Daniel 7. But here God uses different symbolism. In Daniel 7 the four empires are pictured by “four great beasts.” The first, the Babylonian-Chaldean Empire, is “like a lion, and had eagle’s wings” (verse 4). The second, the Medo-Persian Empire, is typed by a bear (verse 5). In verse 6 the Greek Empire is symbolized by a leopard with four wings, depicting a kingdom with terrific speed and agility. (Remember how fast Alexander the Great blazed across Asia Minor and the Mideast?)

Now notice how Daniel 7 describes the fourth beast. It is totally unique. Verse 7 says, “[B]ehold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.”

The beast depicting the terrifying Roman Empire isn’t symbolized by a known animal, like a lion, bear or leopard—but by a unique-looking beast, unlike any normal animal. Notice too, this beast has 10 horns.

These horns represent 10 successive administrations, or resurrections, of the Roman Empire.

Next we come to a pivotal truth.

In verse 8, Daniel continues describing the fourth 10-horned beast that symbolizes the Roman Empire. “I considered the horns, and, *behold, there came up among them another little horn*, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” Clearly this “little horn” is separate from the 10.

But notice: This powerful little horn comes on the scene *after* the first three horns, or administrations. In fact, this “little horn,” this administration, plucks up—it overcomes and destroys—the first three horns. In verse 20, Daniel explains this prophecy: “And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.”

The Hebrew word translated “stout” means “captain, chief, great, lord, master” (*Strong’s Concordance*). This “little horn” is clearly a powerful and commanding institution. And it begins ruling over the last seven horns *after* it destroys the first three.

The identity of this “little horn” is obvious: It is the Roman Catholic Church, which began *leading* the Holy Roman Empire *after* the demise of the three Goth tribes that dominated Rome in the fifth century.

“God reveals so much in this one scripture,” Mr. Flurry writes. “This verse depicts the 10 horns that grow out of the fourth beast—the Roman Empire. It depicts a ‘little horn’—a great false church—coming on the scene after

three horns are plucked up. The church directed the violent uprooting of the barbarians. The three horns picture three governments (the Heruli, the Vandals and the Ostrogoths) that came and went, and then suddenly the whole configuration changed from that point forward: The great church guided every succeeding resurrection of this Roman Empire, in an unprecedented church-state relationship” (*Daniel Unlocks Revelation*). If you are interested in really proving this prophecy and understanding it deeply, request and read this free booklet.

Notice what Mr. Flurry writes next: “God revealed to Herbert W. Armstrong that this verse was the key to European history. *So European history is tied to Daniel’s image*. The last seven horns comprise a church-state relationship, which began in A.D. 554—led by Justinian. Once you understand that, it is much easier to see where it is. Europe was ruled by a church-state relationship and is unique in this way. *That is a super-critical key to understanding its past*. This combine is called the Holy Roman Empire. It has produced the most destructive church-state relationship in human history!” (emphasis added).

The message of Daniel 7:8 must underpin our study of European history, and specifically the history of the Holy Roman Empire. It is a counterpart to Revelation 17, though it was written almost 600 years *before* the book of Revelation.

Read the remainder of Daniel 7: After rising up to destroy the first three horns, this “little horn” stays around to guide and influence the last seven horns, which represent seven resurrections of the Roman Empire. These seven resurrections—*each under the spiritual and moral influence of the “little horn”*—comprise the *seven resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire*.

## REVELATION 13

About 600 years after God inspired the Prophet Daniel to write these prophecies, He added to them through the Apostle John, who wrote the book of Revelation.

In Revelation 13, the Apostle John discusses two distinct beasts. The first, described in verses 1 to 10, has features similar to but slightly different from the four distinct beasts described in Daniel 7. But it depicts *the same four world-ruling empires*, including the 10 horns of the Roman Empire, described in Daniel 7.

Verses 11 to 18 describe the second beast of Revelation 13. Verse 11 says, “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.” What powerful symbolism. This beast appears harmless and enticing, like a lamb. But when it speaks, it is terrifying and dangerous, like a dragon. The institution represented by this beast looks peaceful and altruistic, but it is vicious and cruel.

A dragon in biblical symbolism represents Satan the devil (e.g. Revelation 12). This beast is Satan’s creation. It is his primary instrument for deceiving mankind and seeking to destroy the true followers of God.

What does this second beast of Revelation 13 represent? As Herbert Armstrong explained in his booklet *Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?* “This second beast of Revelation 13 is also pictured in Revelation 17 as the harlot woman who rode the beast. This fallen woman, or church, is different from all other churches in one respect. She is organized as a civil government, as well as an ecclesiastical church. Nations of the world send ambassadors to her, the same as they do the capitals of other nations.”

The second beast of Revelation 13 dominates the world (verses 12-18). It violently and cruelly forces



### A BEAST LIKE NO OTHER

Revelation 13 depicts the Roman Empire as an empire possessing the strengths of all its predecessors.

humans into submission and worship. It seeks to extinguish its opponents. It is inspired and fueled by Satan and his demons, who infuse it with the power to do “great wonders” and many “miracles.”

## REVELATION 17: THE ALL-IMPORTANT CHAPTER

To understand the specifics of the Holy Roman Empire, Revelation 17 is the key chapter. The Holy Roman Empire is its theme. It is different from Daniel 2 and 7 and Revelation 13 as it discusses *only* the last seven resurrections of the Roman Empire. Once again, just as He did in Daniel 2 and 7 and Revelation 13, God reveals the truth about the Holy Roman Empire by causing the Apostle John to see a vivid and dramatic beast.

Before God revealed this image, He sent an angel who explained to John what he was about to see. “... Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (Revelation 17:1-2). This image was about a *great false religion* that deceived the world—and, by spiritual deception, ruled kings, or governments.

Next, read for yourself what John saw in vision: “[A]nd I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” (verse 3). Notice, there are two distinct parts to this image: a “woman,” or church—and a “scarlet coloured beast” with seven heads and 10 horns, upon which the woman rode.

We now know the identities of both the woman and the beast. “The seven heads symbolize the seven dynasties or historic peaks of the Holy Roman Empire,”

wrote Mr. Armstrong in the January 1979 *Plain Truth*. “The 10 horns are 10 kings or nations comprising this empire at the time of its seventh stage.” Verse 9 explains further what these seven heads represent: “... The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.” In the Bible, a mountain is a symbol for a government.

Each “head” of this Revelation 17 beast represents a distinct administration, or government!

As we have proved in this book, together these seven successive governments comprise the beast of Revelation 17. The first head, or government, was Emperor Justinian and the Imperial Restoration of A.D. 554; the second, Emperor Charlemagne and the Frankish Empire of A.D. 774; the third, Otto the Great and the Holy Roman Empire in 962; the fourth, the Habsburg dynasty of the early 16th century; the fifth, Napoleon’s kingdom in the early 19th century; the sixth, the German-Italian axis ultimately responsible for World War II.

The seventh head, or government, which is comprised of 10 horns, or 10 kings, is now coalescing in Europe!

But remember what the *most distinguishing and important feature* of the Revelation 17 beast is! Read it again in verses 3-5: “... I saw *a woman sit upon* a scarlet coloured beast .... And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

Never forget that image, for it is the key that unlocks the history of Europe and future world events!

This seven-headed beast is inspired, guided and exploited by a great false religion. This false religion is the woman of Revelation 17—she is responsible for guiding each of the seven governments of the Holy Roman Empire. More than any other secular power or individual, this woman, who is under the influence of Satan the devil—the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4)—is responsible for the unspeakable atrocities committed by the Holy Roman Empire.

Also, we cannot forget the *reason* this woman-beast alliance exists. Revelation 17:6 says, “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus ...” In Daniel 7:25 this religion is symbolized by a “little horn” that shall “speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High ...”

This is a vital truth: Satan the devil raised up the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire as his PRIMARY WEAPON for destroying the TRUE SAINTS OF GOD! Think about that. How can Catholicism be God’s true religion when the Bible says the Catholic Church exists to oppose and destroy the true Church?

If you want to find God’s true Church, LOOK FOR A CHURCH THAT IS BEING PERSECUTED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE! Look for the Church that is exposing the truth about the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire.

## THE FIFTH KINGDOM?

Before we finish, we must consider a vital component—in fact, the most important—of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2. This part of the dream is often overlooked or ignored, but it is by far the most exciting. One can be

intrigued and excited by the symbolism of the image, by the head of gold and the other three materials—and the fact that these four parts explain world history—and fail to think much about this image’s *ultimate fate*.

Read it for yourself: “Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:34-35).

There is far greater depth in those two scriptures than most people know.

These two verses discuss *the entire gospel message!* They show us that God has a plan for mankind!

What does the “stone” that is “cut out without hands” represent? The Bible reveals that it is *Jesus Christ!*

Ephesians 2:20 says that God’s Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, “Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” In 1 Corinthians 10:4 Christ is identified as “that spiritual Rock.”

This stone flying in from heaven and destroying the image pictures the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, this stone—after smashing the image and grinding it so thoroughly that the dust of iron, clay, brass, silver and gold blow away and vanish—transforms into a “great mountain” that “filled the whole earth.” Daniel explains this: “And in the days of these kings shall *the God of heaven set up a kingdom*, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces

and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Daniel 2:44).

When Jesus returns, after demolishing the cruel, savage kingdoms of man, He will establish on Earth the eternal Kingdom of God!

Daniel 7 describes the same course of events. After describing the four beasts—each corresponding to the four parts of the statue in Daniel 2—the prophet explains what happens after the time allotted to the Roman Empire expires. “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him” (Daniel 7:27).

The final human kingdom—the seventh resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire—will be *replaced by the Kingdom of God*.

This eternal kingdom will be ruled by Jesus Christ and the “saints of the most High.” In addition to Christ, there will be other God beings sitting on the throne with Christ establishing and reigning over the everlasting Kingdom of God! (Revelation 3:21; 20:4-6).

This is the very gospel message that Christ preached! (Mark 1:14-15).

The same people that the Holy Roman Empire worked so hard to destroy will be ruling in the Kingdom of God. Their victory is prophesied!

Can you begin to fathom what God is teaching us here?

Isn't it marvelous how Bible prophecy and world history—how the Daniel 2 image and the beasts of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17—how the history of the Holy Roman Empire and the shocking truth about the Roman Catholic Church—actually prove the existence

of God and reveal the stunning, incredibly positive and hopeful truth about the coming Kingdom of God?

When you truly understand this, world events and Bible prophecy come alive. Why? *Because they reveal that there is a God in heaven and the dawning of a new future for mankind.*

Think seriously about this: Bible prophecy and world history—even the inglorious and frightening history and prophecy about the Holy Roman Empire—are fundamentally a hope-filled, inspiring message about the gospel of God.

More than any other, this is the great lesson we must take from the Holy Roman Empire: The history of this empire proves God's existence, it proves the Bible is true and accurate, and it proves that the establishment on this Earth of the Kingdom of God is just ahead.

There is no more exciting, positive message than that!

## THE DEADLY ‘WOUND’

---

**I**N REVELATION 13, THE APOSTLE JOHN DESCRIBES A beast that looks very similar to the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Both beasts represent the fourth world-ruling empire, the Roman Empire of 31 B.C. to A.D. 476. As John depicts it, this beast includes the most powerful characteristics of all the beasts that preceded it. It had seven heads, but the only head existing at the time John saw it was that of the fourth beast of Daniel, containing the seventh head, and also the 10 horns.

Revelation 13:3 describes “one of his heads as it were wounded to death.” The head that was wounded was the one picturing the Roman Empire, which also had 10 horns. These horns, as Daniel makes clear, represent 10 successive governments of the Roman Empire that were to continue until the establishment of the Kingdom of God at Jesus Christ’s Second Coming.

What was the “wound” John described? This deadly wound was inflicted on the Roman Empire when, in its last decaying stages, the barbarians overran the city of Rome, temporarily ending its government in A.D. 476. At that moment, for the first time since its creation, the Roman Empire was not ruled by a Roman. The empire was wounded and effectively dead!

Study the history. The Roman Empire in northern

Africa was overrun by the Vandals, who sacked Rome in 455. Then in 476, Odoacer set up his government at Rome, called the Heruli. But this regime did not heal the deadly wound, for it was not a Roman government but one of foreign barbarians. Then came the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, from 493 to 554—another foreign people that ruled in the territory. They were subsequently driven out of Italy, and they disappeared.

These three kingdoms were the first three horns, or governments. These three kingdoms sweeping into the Roman territory filled the period known in history as the “transition age” (see *Ancient History*, by Philip Van Ness Myers). It was a *transition* between the wound and the healing.

But notice: Revelation 13:3 says the wound would be “healed” and the Roman Empire would continue.

In Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 7, we see another “little horn” arise and pluck up the first three horns, which symbolized those three barbarian tribes that ruled Rome (verse 8). This left seven horns to come. Of the little horn, Daniel 7 says his “look was more stout than his fellows” (verse 20). The Hebrew word for “stout” means “captain, chief, great, lord, master” (*Strong’s Concordance*).

This horn represents the Catholic Church, which completely dominated all the horns to follow.

When was the “wound” healed? It was when the barbarian tribes were ousted from Rome. This occurred in A.D. 554, when “Justinian, emperor of the East, from Constantinople, set up his government through an Imperial Legate at Ravenna, Italy, and brought about what is known as the ‘Imperial Restoration’ of the empire” (Herbert W. Armstrong, *Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?*) (see Chapter 2).

## THE 73<sup>RD</sup> EMPEROR OF THE FOURTH WORLD EMPIRE

---

**O**N THAT FAMOUS CHRISTMAS IN A.D. 800, THE POPE crowned Charlemagne “73rd emperor of the fourth world empire.” Why the fourth empire? The idea did not originate with this pope. Many scholars and theologians knew at the time that the Roman Empire was the fourth world-ruling kingdom. Many even identified this fourth kingdom with the one the Prophet Daniel spoke of. In fact, centuries before, while the old Roman Empire still existed, most Jews and Christians thought it would be the world’s last kingdom because of Daniel’s prophecy.

That is why Europeans and Catholics kept trying to revive the empire: The Bible said there would only be four empires.

Though many scholars knew the Roman Empire was prophesied to be the final world empire, beyond that, they tragically misinterpreted Bible prophecies. That is

what led to so much violence and bloodshed during the Middle Ages.

People falsely assumed that the antichrist would emerge on the world scene once the Roman Empire was extinguished. What the Bible actually says is that after the fourth empire passes from the scene, *God's Kingdom* will be set up (Daniel 2:44).

This also was misinterpreted because people during the Middle Ages assumed the Holy Roman Empire *was* God's Kingdom on Earth! That elevated their laws and aspirations for world rule *above* God's. Thus, the groundwork for the tragedy of the Middle Ages was laid—not upon a *holy* empire, but upon Satan-inspired, gross misinterpretations of God's Word.

The Germans, more than any other people, felt it their divine duty to preserve this “Holy” Roman Empire so that “antichrist” might not appear. So time and again, when the empire sank into decay, it would somehow muster enough strength to again raise itself—usually behind one powerful leader, oftentimes German, supported by a powerful religious head in Rome.

What the people of these empires also failed to understand was that these same Roman resurrections were *themselves* prophesied in the Bible!

Scripture does foretell of four, and only four, world-ruling empires. But that final empire, after it was crushed in A.D. 476, was prophesied to rise seven more times, which would be in conjunction with the papal authority in Rome as the resurrected “Holy Roman Empire.” It was that same Roman Empire, under new names and titles, that again rose up during the 20th century under German dominance, and that awaits one last resurrection, again prodded by a strong European hand, probably German.

A detailed illustration of a red dragon with multiple heads, set against a dark, mountainous landscape. The dragon's body is a vibrant red with intricate scales, and its heads are also red with yellow eyes and sharp, blue-tinted horns. The dragon is positioned on the right side of the frame, with its heads facing left. The background features jagged, dark mountains under a cloudy, orange-hued sky. The overall mood is dramatic and ominous.

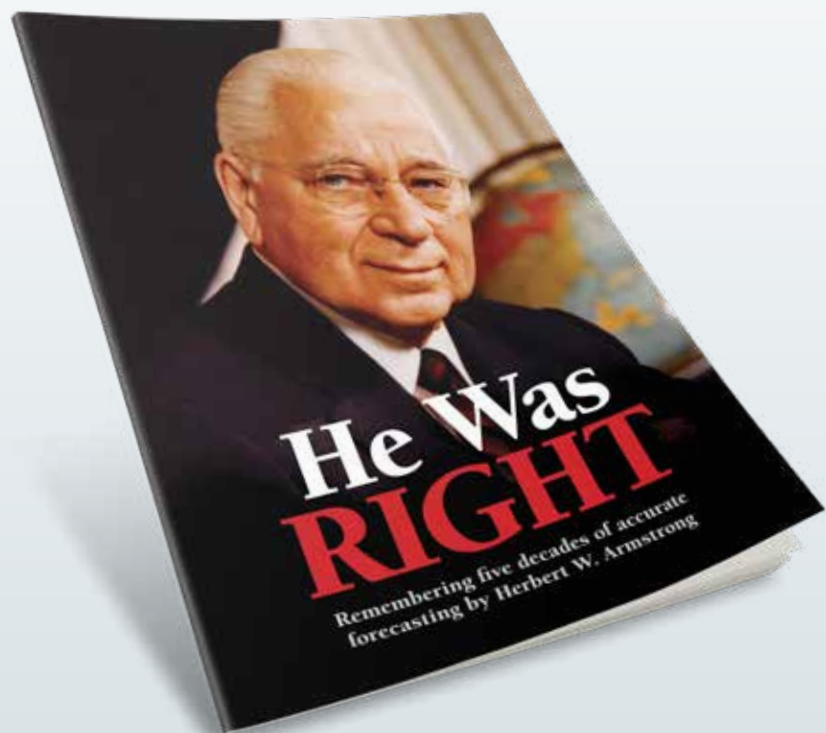
# LAMBS BEASTS DRAGONS SERPENTS

What does it all mean?



Bible prophecy is filled with symbolic creatures that represent modern institutions. To find out what those symbols mean, order our free booklet *Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?*





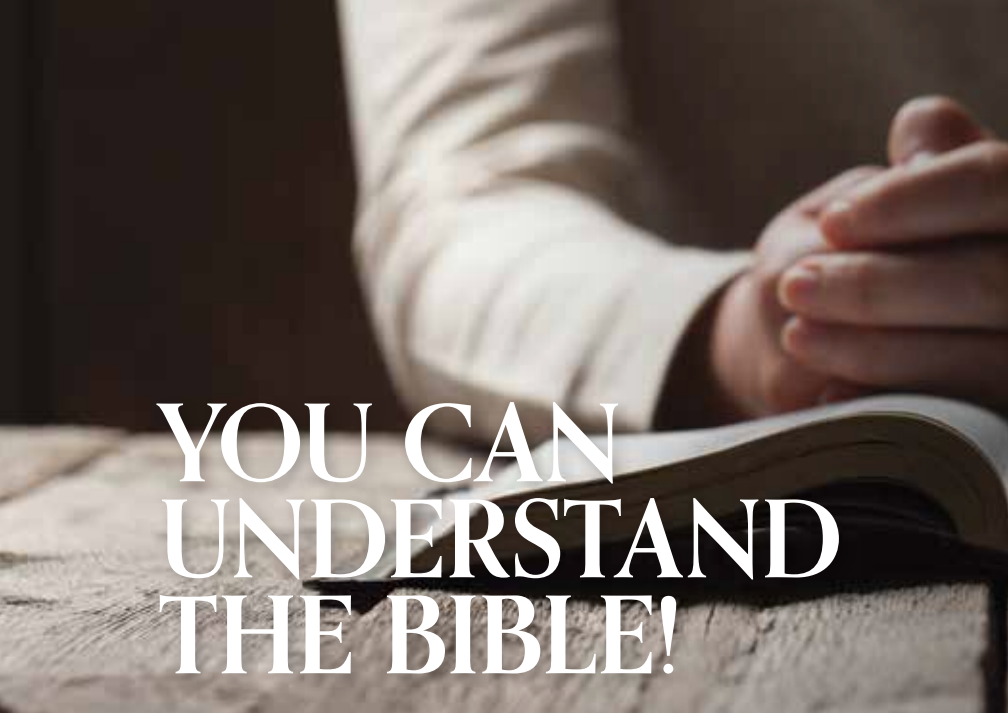
# 50 YEARS OF ACCURATE FORECASTING

Herbert W. Armstrong used Bible prophecy to make bold prophecies about world events.

His track record will astound you.

You can prove the accuracy of his prophetic statements by reading ***He Was Right.***

Request your free copy today and see the certainty of biblical prophecy for yourself.



# YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!

**B**ELIEVE IT OR NOT, THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN FOR OUR day—this generation! No book is as up to date as the Bible. It explains the causes of present world conditions; it reveals what is ahead in the next few years. In its pages are the solutions to every problem we face in life—from personal and family relationships to national economics and foreign policy.

Yet ironically, this incredible book is the least understood of all books. Most people, when they try to read it, find that they simply cannot understand it. Many assume it is irrelevant and out-of-date for our modern age.

But you can understand the Bible!

Herbert W. Armstrong College has been helping thousands to learn both the meaning of current events and the true purpose of life through the *Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course*. Over

## Enroll in the *Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course*



**[bcc.hwacollege.org](http://bcc.hwacollege.org)**



**[letters@pcog.org](mailto:letters@pcog.org)**



**1-800-772-8577 (toll-free)**



**PCG | P.O. Box 3700 | Edmond, OK 73083**



NO CHARGE. NO FOLLOW-UP. NO OBLIGATION.

100,000 students from around the world have enrolled in this unique, 36-lesson course of biblical understanding.

This course has been designed to guide you through a systematic study of your own Bible. The Bible is the only textbook. Best of all, these lessons are absolutely free. There is no cost or obligation—ever.

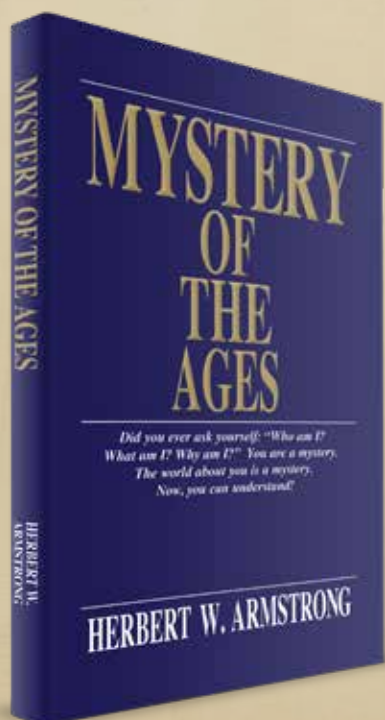
Sign up online and automatically receive your first four lessons along with a test. You will unlock four more lessons after passing each periodic test. If you would rather receive the lessons by mail, call to receive them free.

Why delay? Begin to understand your Bible today! Simply call, visit us online, or write to the address nearest you and ask to be enrolled in the *Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course*.

Join over 100,000 who have already enrolled in this free Bible course, and begin to really understand your entire Bible for the first time!

WHAT AM I?  
WHAT IS MY PURPOSE?  
WHY SO MUCH SUFFERING?  
IS THERE A GOD?

Answer life's greatest and most-ignored questions.  
Request *Mystery of the Ages*, by Herbert W. Armstrong—  
and get the answers.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

To reach the Philadelphia Church of God to order literature or to request a visit from one of God's ministers:

### MAILING ADDRESSES WORLDWIDE

**UNITED STATES:** Philadelphia Church of God  
P.O. Box 3700, Edmond, OK 73083

**CANADA:** Philadelphia Church of God  
P.O. Box 400, Campbellville, ON L0P 1B0

**CARIBBEAN:** Philadelphia Church of God  
P.O. Box 2237, Chaguanas, Trinidad, W.I.

**BRITAIN, EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST:**  
Philadelphia Church of God, P.O. Box 16945  
Henley-in-Arden, B95 8BH, United Kingdom

**AFRICA:** Philadelphia Church of God  
Postnet Box 219, Private Bag X10010, Edenvale, 1610

**AUSTRALIA, THE PACIFIC ISLES, INDIA AND SRI LANKA:**  
Philadelphia Church of God  
P.O. Box 293, Archerfield, QLD 4108, Australia

**NEW ZEALAND:** Philadelphia Church of God  
P.O. Box 6088, Glenview, Hamilton 3246

**PHILIPPINES:** Philadelphia Church of God  
P.O. Box 52143, Angeles City Post Office, 2009 Pampanga

**LATIN AMERICA:** Philadelphia Church of God, Attn: Spanish Department  
P.O. Box 3700, Edmond, OK 73083 United States

### WEBSITES

**PHILADELPHIA CHURCH OF GOD:** [pcg.church](http://pcg.church)

**THE TRUMPET:** [theTrumpet.com](http://theTrumpet.com)

**ARMSTRONG INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL FOUNDATION:** [Armstrong.Foundation](http://Armstrong.Foundation)

**HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG COLLEGE:** [HWACollege.org](http://HWACollege.org)

### CONNECT WITH US

**EMAIL:** [letters@pcog.org](mailto:letters@pcog.org)

**FACEBOOK:** [facebook.com/PhiladelphiaChurchofGod](https://facebook.com/PhiladelphiaChurchofGod)

**TWITTER:** @PCG\_News





